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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ROMANTIC EPIGONISM AND INNOVATION IN THE LYRIC POETRY OF EICHENDORFF, KEATS AND GAUTIER

by

(C) ANNA M. HAINWORTH

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Romantic Epigonism and Innovation in the Lyric Poetry of Eichendorff, Keats and Gautier" submitted by Anna Magdalena Hainworth in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

In their position as late Romantic poets, Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier faced a similar problem. When their first poetry appeared, the Romantic Movement was well established, and the late Romantic was thus left with a choice: to self-consciously propagate the themes and forms popularized by his precursors, or to move against and beyond literary conventions.

A close reading of several representative lyrical poems by Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier, with secondary reference to prose works and longer poetic texts, reveals elements which are inherited from their Romantic precursors, and others which seek to modify or transform the movement. The three writers' treatment of five themes and modes--the poetic self, nature, exoticism, melancholy, and irony--shows the diverse ways in which the late Romantic poet reacted to the problems of epigonism and innovation. Of the three poets, Eichendorff remains the closest to the Romantic tradition, combining and recombining the well-known emblems of Romanticism. Nevertheless, his poetry often reveals an orthodox religiosity, simplicity, harmony, detachment, and discipline of form which sets him apart from his German precursors. More than Eichendorff, Keats and Gautier struggle against their inherited tradition. From youthful imitation, they move on to reject or ironize many Romantic themes and poses. Rebellion against the poetry of "palpable design" leads Keats to concentrate on poetry as an end in itself, divorced from moral or didactic purposes. Similarly, Gautier's rejection of Romantic idealism

and his intense aestheticism make him a forerunner of l'art pour l'art; moreover, his talent for minute observation and the eventual impassibility of his work link him to the Parnassian school.

In much of their poetry, Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier temper Romantic sensibility with restraint and detachment, and tend to emphasize the formal aspects of poetry. While Eichendorff, however, continues to see himself within the context of the Romantic Movement, the work of Keats and especially that of Gautier forms a transition between Romanticism and later literary movements.

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INDEX TO ABBREVIATIONS

E, (Vol. no.)	Joseph von Eichendorff, Werke und Schriften, hrsg. von G. Baumann und S. Grosse, 4 Bde. (Stuttgart: Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1957-58).
HR	Théophile Gautier, L'Histoire du romantisme, (Paris: Charpentier, 1877).
M de M	----------. Mademoiselle de Maupin, ed. A. Boschot, (Paris: Garnier, 1955).
G, (Vol. no.)	----------. Poésies complètes, ed. R. Jasinski, 3 vols., (Paris: Nizet, 1970).
KL, (Vol. no)	John Keats, The Letters of John Keats, ed. H.E. Rollins, 2 vols., (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958).
K	----------. The Poetical Works of John Keats, ed. H.W. Garrod, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958).

INTRODUCTION

Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857), John Keats (1795-1821), and Théophile Gautier (1811-72) share a similar position in the respective Romanticisms of the German, English, and French languages. None of these poets can be called an "originator" of the Romantic Movement. When Eichendorff began writing in the first decade of the nineteenth century, Tieck, Novalis, the Schlegels, and Brentano had already published many of the major works of German Romanticism. At the time that Keats published his first poem in 1816, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey were already past the peak of their poetic achievement. Théophile Gautier's Poésies appeared in 1830, when Romanticism in France had already made firm headway into the Neo-Classical tradition and Victor Hugo was the lion of French literary circles.

This historical situation, in which precursors and major authors had laid the foundations of the Romantic revolution, was bound to have mixed effects on the later Romantic generation. With reference to Keats, W.J. Bate has commented upon "the large, often paralyzing embarrassment" arising from "the rich accumulation of past poetry" which "can curse as well as bless."[1] This statement can be applied with equal justice to Eichendorff and Gautier. While the earlier Romantics had, to a large degree, uprooted the conventions of Neo-Classicism, they had themselves created new conventions. Jacques Barzun has characterized Romanticism as "change following upon fixity."[2] By the

same token, fixity evolved from the initial dynamism of Romanticism. At the times that Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier were writing, there already existed a set of Romantic themes, vocabulary, and poses.

The late Romantic writer was thus left with a choice: to become the epigone of the movement, or to innovate in his turn. Even innovation, however, presupposes influence. Moreover, as Harold Bloom states, "poetic influence need not make poets less original; as often it makes them more original, though not therefore necessarily better."[3] The poet either supports himself on conventional props, or he rearranges, borrows, and rejects.

> Poetic influence--when it involves two strong, authentic poets, always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation. The history of fruitful poetic influence, which is to say the main tradition of Western poetry since the Renaissance, is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, wilful revisionism without which modern poetry as such could not exist.[4]

By means of a close reading of representative lyrical poems by Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier, with some reference to prose works and longer poetic texts, we shall seek to determine to what extent "creative correction," "self-saving caricature," "distortion," and "revisionism" are present, and to what extent the poets stay rooted in the newly-created Romantic tradition. We shall look for qualities in their work which are obviously inherited from their immediate predecessors, and those which give a new twist to Romantic conventions and even go against or beyond the movement.

The concept of the epigone is, as Herbert Cysarz states, not popular in modern literary criticism.[5] While a number of studies of epigonism have been made in German, little attention has been paid to this phenomenon by English-language writers.[6] It is nevertheless a useful term in literary scholarship to designate a member of a succeeding and, by inference, a less distinguished generation, faced with the problems of the latecomer. The epigone's state of mind has been described by Claude David: "Der Epigone sagt: wir kommen zu spät. Wir haben das Große hinter uns, wir sind Erben und Nachfolger. Mehr können wir einstweilen nicht verlangen."[7] He is thus overcome, at least initially, by the impact of a preceding generation. Epigonal writers are those who "im Fahrwasser eines großen Vorbilds--bzw. einer großen Kunstperiode--bleiben, ohne an sich noch die Kraft zu haben, im Geist dieses großen Vorbilds weiter zu schaffen."[8]

The consciousness of being an epigone was not uncommon in the first decades of the nineteenth century. In German literature, Karl Leberecht Immermann's prominent "Zeitroman," Die Epigonen (1823-1835), bewails the plight of the latecomer:

> Wir sind. . . Epigonen, und tragen an der Last, die jeder Erb- und Nachgeborenschaft anzukleben pflegt. Die große Bewegung im Reiche des Geistes, welche unsre Väter von ihren Hütten und Hüttchen aus unternahmen, hat uns eine Menge von Schätzen zugeführt, welche nun auf allen Markttischen ausliegen. Ohne die Scheidemünze jeder Kunst und Wissenschaft zu erwerben. Aber es geht mit geborgten Ideen wie mit geborgtem Gelde: wer mit fremden Gute leichtfertig wirtschaftet wird wieder ärmer.[9]

This feeling of having inherited ready-made ideas was shared by other

Romantics and post-Romantics. In France, Alfred de Musset wrote in his Confession d'un enfant du siècle (1836):

> . . . l'éclectisme est notre goût; nous prenons tout ce que nous trouvons, ceci pour sa beauté, cela pour sa commodité, telle autre chose pour son antiquité, telle autre pour sa laideur même; en sorte que nous ne vivons que de débris, comme si la fin du monde était proche. . . Je devenais amoureux de tous les poètes l'un après l'autre; mais, étant d'une nature très impressionable, le dernier venu avait toujours le don de me dégoûter du reste. Je m'étais fait un grand magasin de ruines, jusqu'à ce qu'enfin, n'ayant plus soif à force de boire la nouveauté et l'inconnu, je m'étais trouvé une ruine moi-même.[10]

The richness of past poetry also left the English Romantics with what Bate has labelled "the stark problem of what and how to write,"[11] a predicament voiced by Keats in a letter to Richard Woodhouse. Using an analogy similar to that of Musset, he writes:

> It is a wretched thing to confess; but it is a very fact that not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature--how can it, when I have no nature? When I am in a room with People if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then not myself goes home to myself: but the identity of every one in the room begins to press upon me that, I am in a very little time annihilated.[12]

The feeling of living in an era in which all possibilities have already been explored, and little is left to create, was thus current, and it is with this embarrassment of the past that the younger generation was forced to wrestle.

The epigone, as we have said, lives in the shadow of a great literary predecessor or of a great literary movement, and this situation inevitably affects the style and content of his writing. According to

Manfred Windfuhr, in his definitive study of the concept of epigonism,[13] a distinction must be made between the mere dilettante and the epigone. While the former distinguishes himself only through mediocrity, the latter may be an accomplished writer: "Die Epigonenkunst ist nicht Ergebnis eines Mangels, sondern eines Überflusses."[14] The epigone has many tools at his disposal, and combines literary topoi with great facility. He takes advantage of the ready-made availability of special words, images, and themes inherited from a previous generation. Only on a superficial level, however, does his art product resemble the works on which it is modelled: "Das Epigonenprodukt gleicht dem Vorbild nur scheinbar. Im Innern zeigt sich die Reduktion der Epigone verflacht und verengt die Aussagen der Muster, er harmonisiert, wo vorher Spannungen waren, trivialisiert, was ungewöhnlich war. . . Der Epigone beschränkt sich auf eine Tendenz des Vorbildes und vervielfacht sie."[15] The work thus lacks the tensions of earlier works since as an inheritor the epigone no longer has to strive to achieve the themes and forms he desires; as Musset, Immermann, and Keats complain, they are spread out for the taking. The simplicity, harmony, and familiarity of his writing may make him, however, more popular than his predecessors.[16]

At the same time, the eclecticism which characterizes the epigone causes him to employ a great variety of forms, in the belief that he is in this way expanding upon the work of his model.[17] Epigonal

work is thus marked by a concentration on form, a general mannerism, précieux elements, and an epigrammatic quality; or the writer may turn upon the tradition he has propagated with the tools of irony. This last quality, maintains Windfuhr, characterizes decadent art: "Der Epigone ist der Tradition erlegen und unterlegen, der Décadent setzt sich spielerisch mit ihr auseinander."[18]

Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier were faced with the problems of epigonism in three forms. First, they were latecomers in a major literary movement. Second, they came under the shadow of great individual writers. Third, all three had to confront the problem of the young poet who achieves independence only through the imitation, modification, and rejection of inherited themes and forms.[19] This struggle is, of course, not unique to late Romanticism, but is cyclically re-enacted in literary and cultural history.

> Die Retrachtung des Epigonentums und Epigonenbewußtseins hat in weitverzweigte historische und kunsttheoretische Zusammenhänge geführt. Es zeigte sich, daß beides der Sache nach keineswegs neu ist, sondern als die Kehrseite des Schöpferischen regelmäßig aufzutreten pflegt.[20]

Although each poet had to come to terms, not only with the newly-created poetic tradition, but also with strong influences from other movements, this study will confine itself to the struggle of the late Romantic with his own tradition, It will focus, in the instance of Théophile Gautier, only on the earlier phase of his work, preceding his definitive break with Romanticism.

Other latecomers to Romanticism could naturally also have been chosen for the purposes of this study. Among other poets, Heine, Poe,

or Nerval were also faced with the choice of either propagating the forms and themes of their precursors or of moving against or beyond their inherited tradition. The poetry of Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier reveals, however, a gamut of similarities and differences which lend themselves to a comparative study.

NOTES

[1] W.J. Bate, John Keats (Cambridge: Belknap, 1963), p. 73.

[2] Barzun, cited by H.H.H. Remak in "West European Romanticism: Definition and Scope," Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective, ed. N. Stalknecht and Horst Frey (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1961, rev. 1971), p. 229.

[3] Harold Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), p. 7.

[4] Ibid., p. 30.

[5] Herbert Cysarz, "Epigonendichtung," Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte, hrsg. von W. Kohlschmidt und W. Mohr, 2 Aufl. (Berlin, 1958 ff.), Bd. 1, p. 372.

[6] William van O'Connor has, however, discussed this concept in "Forms of Epigonism," Sense and Sensibility in Modern Poetry (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 173-191. A.P. Antippas makes brief mention of the term in "Keats's Individual Talent and Tradition," Tulane Studies in English 20 (1972), p. 95.

[7] Claude David, "Über den Begriff des Epigonischen," Tradition und Ursprünglichkeit, Akten des III Internationalen Germanisten-Kongresses 1965 in Amsterdam, hrsg. von W. Kohlschmidt und H. Meyer (Bern: Francke, 1966), p. 66.

[8] Ibid., p. 69.

[9] Karl Leberecht Immermann, Werke, Bd. 2: Die Epigonen, hrsg. von Benno v. Wiese et al. (Frankfurt/M.: Athenäum, 1971), p. 121.

[10] Alfred de Musset, La Confession d'un enfant du siècle (Paris: Garnier, 1960), p. 35-6. First published in entirety in 1836.

[11] Bate, The Burden of the Past and the English Poet (Cambridge: Belknap, 1970), p. 5.

[12] John Keats to Richard Woodhouse, 27 October, 1818; The Letters of John Keats, ed. H. Rollins (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), I, p. 387.

[13] Manfred Windfuhr, "Der Epigone, Begriff, Phänomen, Bewußtsein," Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte 4 (1958-9), 182-209.

[14] Ibid., p. 191.

[15] Ibid., p. 192.

[16] Ibid., p. 194.

[17] Ibid., p. 193.

[18] Ibid., p. 193.

[19] C.f. the distinction drawn by Windfuhr between Epochen-epigonentum, Einzelepigonentum, and Jugendepigonentum, pp. 194-6.

[20] Windfuhr, p. 209.

CHAPTER ONE

EUROPEAN ROMANTICISM: GENERAL BACKGROUND

A comparative study of three poets, all of whom have left a considerable body of work, demands some selectivity. For this reason, five themes and modes have been isolated as bases of comparison. First, we shall examine each writer's concept of his poetic function and of his view of himself as part of, or opposed to, the Romantic Movement. The primary texts to be examined here will be Eichendorff's An die Dichter (printed 1811), with secondary reference to his Geschichte der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands (1857); Keat's Sleep and Poetry (1817) and, secondarily, his letters; and Gautier's Compensation (1838) and, secondarily, his Histoire du romantisme (left unfinished upon his death in 1872). The analysis of the poems and prose texts for this first theme will not be exhaustive: we shall merely attempt to arrive at general conclusions concerning the poet's view of his function and his attitude toward Romanticism. The second theme will be that of nature, and discussion will centre on Keats's Ode to Autumn (1819), Gautier's Pensées de l'automne (1830), and Eichendorff's Nachts (1853). For the third theme, that of dejection or melancholy, Eichendorff's Zwielicht (1815), Keats's Ode on Melancholy (1819), and Gautier's Trou du serpent (1838) have been chosen. Keats's Robin Hood (1818), Gautier's Moyen âge (1830) and Melancholia (1834), and Eichendorff's Sehnsucht (printed 1834) will illustrate the theme of exoticism, or dépaysement in time or

place. Finally, discussion will centre on irony, of which Eichendorff's Soldat (1814), Keats's Robin Hood (1818), and Gautier's Tristesse (1838) will serve as examples, and from these poems we shall seek to determine whether they are indeed illustrative of Romantic irony.

The discussion of themes and modes of expression in late Romanticism necessitates some definition of what characteristics will be regarded as "Romantic." Difficulties are, of course, inherent in describing the attributes of a complex movement and, as François Jost suggests, "L'essentiel, pour de telles études, sera toujours d'identifier au préalable le caméléon: reconnaître les chromatophores contenus dans sa peau."[1] This study will work on the assumption that European Romanticism, in spite of its diversity, offers numerous parallels from one national literature to another. The search for these parallels takes, as H.H.H. Remak points out,[2] three main forms. The first type of definition singles out one or two alleged traits of Romanticism to stand for the movement as a whole; or the attempt may be made to contrast it with other movements, particularly Classicism. A second, or transitional type of definition, singles out a broad central denominator with the claim that it covers the entire movement. Finally, definitions may aim at all-inclusiveness by arriving at a set of common Romantic features. Remak's own approach is to list allegedly representative Romantic characteristics in order to determine whether and to what extent they exist in the key national literatures of

Western Europe.[3] From this tally, he reaches several conclusions:

> If it is at all reliable, certain clichés may have to be abandoned: that Romanticism as a whole is "vague" and "unrealistic," that it is opposed to classicism and to the eighteenth century, that it has a set body of metaphysics, and that it is politically liberal (or, for that matter, "reactionary"). We see that West European Romanticism possesses a reasonable cohesiveness and shares in certain attitudes toward the past, but with notable qualifications; and that there is sweeping agreement in general attitudes and in specific artistic tendencies.[4]

In what is probably the most famous formulation of Romantic poetry by a Romantic, Friedrich Schlegel writes: "Die romantische Poesie ist eine progressive Universalpoesie."[5] This sentence focuses on two aspects of Romanticism: first, on its emphasis on the dynamic, and second, on its emphasis on totality. Poetry was no longer, as in the Neo-Classical tradition, the work of "handicraftsmen"[6] who worked according to rules. In its emphasis on creativity, Romanticism rejects static conventions and tends to regard art as dynamic and multi-faceted. Poetry goes beyond its merely representative function (as a "Spiegel der ganzen umgebenden Welt"[7]), and has the ability to see the world in its diversity:

> Und doch kann auch sie am meisten zwischen dem Dargestellten und dem Darstellenden, frei von allen realen und idealen Interesse auf den Flügeln der poetischen Reflexion in der Mitte schweben, diese Reflexion immer wieder potenzieren und wie in einer endlosen Reihe von Spiegeln vervielfachen.[8]

The great aim of Romantic poetry is to achieve a vision of totality: "sie umfaßt alles, was nur poetisch ist;"[9] at the same time, this totality is dynamic, constantly evolving: "Die romantische Dichtart ist noch im

Werden; ja das ist ihr eigentliches Wesen, daß sie ewig nur werden, nie vollendet sein kann."[10]

In a somewhat more restrained fashion, English Romantic writers of the earlier generation also argued that poetry must present the totality of human existence. "Poetry," says Wordsworth in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads (1800), "is the image of man and nature,"[11] and both must be seen in their full dynamic interaction:

> What then does the Poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions which by habit become of the nature of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding every where objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.[12]

Although Wordsworth does not go so far in the Preface as to say that man and nature are one, part of a Schellingian "Werdendes Ich," he points nevertheless toward a breakdown of the traditional dichotomy between subject and object. The poet, he says, "considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature."[13]

Victor Hugo's Préface to Cromwell (1827), in spite of its being concerned more specifically with the theatre than with poetry in general, nevertheless presents a concept of poetic creation similar to those of Schlegel and Wordsworth. Hugo also pleads for the universality of poetry

by stating that the modern muse should see "les choses d'un coup d'oeil plus haut et plus large."[14] Modern poetry must incorporate the diversity of existence, juxtaposing both the beautiful and the grotesque,

> et sous l'influence de cet esprit de mélancolie chrétienne et de critique philosophique que nous observions tout à l'heure, la poésie fera un grand pas, un pas décisif, un pas qui, pareil à la secousse d'un tremblement de terre, changera toute la face du monde intellectuel. Elle se mettra à faire comme la nature, à mêler dans ses créations, sans pourtant les confondre, l'ombre à la lumière, le grotesque au sublime, en d'autres termes, le corps à l'âme, la bête à l'esprit; car le point de départ de la religion est toujours le point de départ de la poésie.[15]

Here, as in the citations from Wordsworth and Schlegel, art is viewed as dynamic and multi-faceted. The poetic vision is no longer, as in Neo-Classicism, seen as passively receiving and organizing data from the external world; rather, it interacts with the world around it, exercising the creative power of the imagination, an act which parallels religious vision.

In three of the major theoretical works of French, German, and English Romanticism, therefore, a similar emphasis is placed on the dynamic and universal nature of poetry, and this unity of thought may lead us to a broad definition of Romanticism. In his article "Romanticism Re-Examined," René Wellek, after discussing the many definitions advanced by twentieth century criticism, comes to the conclusion that "they all see the implication of imagination, symbol, myth, and organic nature, and see it as part of the great endeavor to overcome the split between subject and object, the self and the world, the conscious and the unconscious."[16] The essence or nature of Romanticism lies, he concludes, in its attempt "to

identify subject and object, to reconcile man and nature, consciousness and unconsciousness by poetry."[17] Both the flexibility and all-inclusiveness of this definition lend itself to the purposes of this study of Romanticism.

At this point a brief recapitulation of more specific traits in German, French, and English Romanticism as determined by Remak[18] is relevant. To varying degrees, the Romantic attitude toward the past reveals an interest in folklore, primitivism, medievalism, and anti-Neoclassicism. General attitudes are marked by an emphasis on the imagination, on emotions, on restlessness and boundlessness, and on individualism, subjectivism, and originality. Nature and, to a more limited extent, religion gain in importance. Negative tendencies are evident in a feeling of Weltschmerz and mal du siècle. Romantic works are marked by lyrical moods and forms, greater flexibility of form, an emphasis on symbols, rhetoric, and, to some extent, the use of Romantic irony.[19]

At present there exist no definitive studies of the stylistic and formal attributes of Romantic poetry,[20] and this absence may be due to the nature of Romanticism. A movement which emphasizes diversity and constant evolution to such a degree naturally lays down no easily definable poetic rules. The Romantics themselves tend to mask their interest in formal features through an emphasis on spontaneity and inspiration. Shelley, for instance, says in his Defence of Poetry (1821) that

> the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some

> invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness. . . when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline.[21]

To a large degree, however, the Romantics are vague in their discussions of poetic style, although both F. Schlegel and Wordsworth emphasize spontaneity and simplicity of language: Schlegel, indirectly in Fragment 116, and Wordsworth more specifically in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads. Schlegel insists that poetry must embrace all facets of life and speak to all people:

> Sie will, und soll auch Poesie und Prosa, Genialität und Kritik, Kunstpoesie und Naturpoesie bald mischen, bald verschmelzen, die Poesie lebendig und gesellig, und das Leben und die Gesellschaft poetisch machen. . . Sie umfaßt alles, was nur poetisch ist, vom größten wieder mehre Systeme in sich enthaltenden Systeme der Kunst, bis zu dem Seufzer, dem Kuß, den das dichtende Kind aushaucht in kunstlosen Gesang.[22]

The key words here which reflect on poetic style are "lebendig und gesellig," "poetisch," and "kunstlosen Gesang." First, Schlegel indicates that the language of poetry must be universally relevant; it must, nevertheless, be able to inject a poetic spirit into life and society. Second, it must come naturally, give the appearance of artlessness, and be simple and unaffected.

Speaking less vaguely than Schlegel, Wordsworth expresses similar ideas in his Preface. He is aware that he has altered the traditional contract between the poet and the public:

> It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only thus apprises the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that

others will be carefully excluded.[23]

His poems, he says, are about incidents and situations of real life described in a "selection of the real language of men."[24] He avoids traditional rhetorical figures "as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription,"[25] and only when the content calls for passionate utterance does he make use of figures of speech. The selection of words is an intuitive process governed by feeling: "the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation and not the action and situation to the feeling."[26] Although the poet is a "man speaking to men," and must be able to communicate with all people, the simplicity of his diction imposes no limitations on the scope of his poetry, for "the Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of the passions of men."[27]

In French as well as in English and German literature, Romanticism marked a rupture with "gaudiness and inane phraseology."[28] The French had, as Lilian Furst points out, to combat a "firmly entrenched and ossified Neo-Classicism"[29] and, in this sense, the stylistic revolt was more extreme than among their German and English counterparts. Victor Hugo proclaimed that he would place a red revolutionary cap on the dictionary of the Academy,[30] and this rebellious note pervaded French Romanticism. Hugo's preface to Odes et ballades (1826) gives the following advice: "Admirons les grands maîtres; ne les imitons pas. Faisons autrement. Si nous réussissons, tant mieux; si nous échouons, qu'importe?"[31] Although he insists that the poet must seek

to purify his diction and to develop a style "comme le cristal,"[32] he emphasizes that "le poète ne doit avoir qu'un modèle, la nature; qu'un guide, la vérité. Il ne doit pas écrire avec ce qui a été écrit, mais avec son âme et avec son coeur."[33]

This focus on spontaneity and feeling also had its effect on rhythm and metre. F.L. Lucas refers to the "intoxicating" nature of Romantic verse:

> Pope or Gray, Racine or Boileau can speak perfectly; they can declaim magnificently; but they do not sing. Their verse is exquisite coffee in lordly porcelain; it "cheers but not inebriates;" it is not the wine of Dionysus. It hardly performs at all the essential task of more dancing rhythms--the task of hypnotizing the reader into a dreamy trance, where his sense of reality is drugged and, at the same time, his suggestibility heightened.[34]

The question remains, however, in what ways Romantic poetry works to achieve this "intoxicating" effect. Primarily, poetic rhythms are handled flexibly and rely on the natural music of words: "Our language gives to expression a certain measure and will, in a strong state of passion, admit of scansion from the very mouth."[35] Words and rhythms are employed for their evocative value. As Albert Gérard states, the Romantics practices synaesthesia: "Ils avaient deviné le pouvoir d'association, de connotation, des mots."[36]

This focus on association led to a new use of the image and the metaphor:

> . . . pour la poétique traditionnelle, la fonction propre des images est décorative et persuasive; l'expression imagée orne le poème et intensifie la compréhension des idées. Les romantiques, au contraire, placent l'image au centre du poème, car en elle la multiplicité se ramène à l'unité.[37]

The metaphor becomes an integral part of the poem, and "permet au poète de traduire dans sa pure singularité la perception poétique, où la représentation de l'objet est modifiée par ses propres réactions affectives."[38] In the work of many Romantics, the traditional poetic system of metaphors is reversed, which is, as Abrams observes, an outgrowth of the Romantic reversal of aesthetic philosophy: "By substituting a projective and creative mind and, consonantly, an expressive and creative theory of art, various romantic critics reversed the basic orientation of all aesthetic philosophy."[39] With the substitution of an expressive for a mimetic theory of art, images of the lamp replaced those of the mirror as metaphors for artistic creation; night replaced day as a time of illumination; and, with the change in the spatial projection of reality, "inward" metaphors replaced "outward". As Frye points out, "within" metaphors take the place of those dealing with "up there" as the mind looks within itself for an internal heaven;[40] moreover, metaphors of creative energy, such as the "drunken boat"[41] gain in prominence.

Natural objects, with their connotations of purity and permanence, take on a new significance as symbols of harmony.[42] Images from nature recur, with emphasis on the dynamic movement and interaction of natural phenomena. As Mme de Staël writes in De la littérature (1800),

> Les contrastes de la nature, les effets remarquables qui frappent tous les yeux, transportés pour la première fois dans la poésie, présentent à l'imagination les peintures les plus énergiques, et les oppositions les plus simples.[43]

Natural images are associated with aural: hence the Romantic emphasis on music and on the sounds of nature.[44] This combination of natural and aural images is exemplified in Ludwig Tieck's description of the poet's spirit:

> . . . besonders ist der Geist des Dichters ein ewig bewegter Strom, dessen murmelnde Melodie in keinem Augenblicke schweigt, jeder Hauch rührt ihn an und läßt eine Spur zurück, jeder Lichtstrahl spiegelt sich ab, er bedarf der lastigen Materie am wenigsten und hängt am meisten von sich selber ab, er darf in Mondschimmer und Abendröte seine Bilder kleiden und aus unsichtbaren Harfen nie gehörte Töne locken, auf denen Engel und zarte Geister herniedergleiten und jeden Hörer als Bruder grüßen. . .[45]

Sound and image are, as Foakes observes, "intertwined with human passions so that by a reciprocal action they are endowed with human feelings and with values, and at the same time the poet's feelings and aspirations are purified and sanctified."[46]

The emphasis on the feelings of the individual gives rise to the essentially dramatic character of Romantic verse. L. Gáldi, in his study of Romantic lyrical style, remarks that "the most typical form of poetic utterance is confined to the poetic tirade full of rhetorical affects and 'verbal gestures'."[47] From Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey (1798) to Novalis's Hymnen an die Nacht (1800) to Lamartine's Lac (1820), examples of the poetic monologue abound, and all are liberally sprinkled with exclamations, rhetorical questions, and impassioned pleas. The rhetoric springs, it is important to note, not from the mere use of rhetorical devices, but rather from the sincerity of sentiment displayed by the poet.[48] The dramatic style, joined with the simplicity of diction noted

above, generally makes for short sentences[49] marked by frequent breaks within the sentences themselves:

> Eternité, néant, passé, sombres abîmes,
> Que faites-vous des jours que vous engloutissez?
> Parlez: nous rendrez-vous ces extases sublimes
> Que vous nous ravissez?[50]

Parallelism and repetition, both popular Romantic techniques, are a heritage from oral communication and poetic folklore.[51] Antithesis, which Gáldi calls the most important stylistic device of Romanticism in the Romance languages,[52] is possibly less important in English and German, which seldom equal French poetry in their declamatory nature.

Within the three literatures, Romanticism gave rise to a diversity of verse forms, and the cult of spontaneity affected the form as well as the content of poetry. Reference has been made above to the popularity of the meditative monologue. The ideal vehicle for the expression of personal feelings, the Romantic meditation forms the basis for intimate communication between poet and reader in a lyrical form,[53] and presupposes the identification of reader with poet: "Quand je vous parle de moi, je vous parle de vous."[54] Philosophical poetry, although popular in all eras, underwent great changes:

> Les romantiques transforment ce genre en substituant au poème didactique et presque entièrement impersonnel des formes diverses de poésie personnelle où la pensée joue le principal rôle, où le sentiment, qui l'accompagne et souvent l'a provoquée et la détermine, communique aux idées une résonance plus profonde dans les âmes.[55]

Narration or description form the basis of this poetry, whereby a fact, sight, or history inspires a discussion of life, death, or human destiny.[56] Finally, Romanticism marked an upsurge of interest in the forms of folk poetry. Ushered in by collections such as Percy's Reliques (1765), the

poems of Ossian (1765), and Herder's Volkslieder (1778-9), the folk revival gave rise to many Kunstvolkslieder and ballads, from Bürger's Lenore (1773) to Wordsworth and Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads (1798) to Hugo's Odes et ballades (1826). Whether adapted, based on legend, or invented, they share common characteristics:

> Ce sont des poèmes en général peu étendus, en vers courts le plus souvent, fortement rhythmés, fréquemment partagés en strophes égales; la rime ou l'assonance, l'allitération, la répétition poussée parfois jusqu'au refrain, y jouent un grand rôle. Le style en est simple, concret, volontiers naïf et populaire.[57]

Once more, they give evidence of the Romantic emphasis on spontaneity and simplicity, coupled with the idealization of an uncorrupted past as opposed to an increasingly urbanized, industrialized and mechanized present.

This preliminary discussion of the definition and stylistic characteristics of Romantic lyrical poetry in no way pretends to offer an exhaustive treatment of the subject; it is rather intended to provide general points of reference for the analysis of poems by Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier. The remainder of our general discussion will confine itself to the five topics under consideration: the poetic self, nature, exoticism, melancholy, and Romantic irony.

Romantic individualism undeniably fostered a radically new attitude toward poetic creation. As Furst writes,

> Once the external frame of reference, the concept of a fixed order is abandoned, man is driven to seek a point of certainty within himself. This was the position of the Romantic poets, who sought a principle of order

> established not in terms of the outer world and an appeal to reason, but in terms of the inner world of the individual and an appeal to imagination.[58]

The poet, with his strong imagination and intuition, came to be elevated to a degree unequalled in Neo-Classicism.[59]

German Romanticism laid great weight upon the visionary or religious rôle of the poet. Novalis writes in Blüthenstaub (1798) that

> Dichter und Priester waren im Anfang Eins, und nur spätere Zeiten haben sie getrennt. Der ächte Dichter ist aber immer Priester, so wie der ächte Priester immer Dichter geblieben.[60]

The poet is thus a man set above others, leading humanity with his visionary utterances. This exalted view of the poet is shared by French and, to a lesser degree, by English writers. Lamartine, for instance, says in La Chute d'un ange (1838) that the poet is "parmi les fils les plus doux de la femme"[61] who is from the beginning set apart from other men. He is a hyper-sensitive person, "dont le moindre contact fait frissonner la peau."[62] Inspired by the divinity in nature, poets reproduce this in their poetry:

> C'est dans leur transparente et limpide pensée
> Que l'image infinie est le mieux retracée.[63]

Solitude is essential to poetic creation:

> Ceux-la fuyant la foule et cherchant les retraites
> Ont avec le désert des amitiés secrètes.[64]

Like Novalis and Schlegel, Lamartine maintains that the poet is a prophet:

> Ecoutez-les prier, car ils sont vos prophètes:
> Sur l'écorce ou la pierre, ou l'airain écrivez

Leurs hymnes les plus saints pour l'avenir gravés.[65]

Although Wordsworth is, in comparison with his French and German early Romantic counterparts, conservative in his claims, he also believes in the superiority of the poet:

> For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: but though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached, were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man, who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply.[66]

The combination of sensibility and long and deep thought leads to the creation of poems whereby "the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified."[67] Although he does not go so far as to call himself a prophet, he does not deny the significance of his poetry: "The subject is indeed important!"[68] Even though he does not become the Romantic hero par excellence as does Novalis in Hymnen an die Nacht (1800) or Hugo in Tristesse d'Olympio (1839), or as Byron and Shelley are to do in English Romanticism, Wordsworth often occupies the centre stage in his writings: the Prelude, for instance, is the story of "the growth of a poet's mind."[69]

To varying degrees, therefore, the Romantic poet projects an image of himself as a man of superior intuition and sensibility whose function is often prophetic, religious, or visionary. Most significantly, he tends to be his own hero, and to render his own experiences and feelings into poetry.

As has been shown, Romanticism focuses on the fusion and interaction

of man and nature. Although differences exist between the German, English, and French approach to nature, from the German predilection for metaphysical theorizing to the English objectivity and realism to the French emotionalism,[70] the Romantics generally tended to seek a parallel between the self and the external world. The rationalistic view of the universe as a well-functioning machine had, in the course of the eighteenth century, been discarded,[71] and nature had come to be viewed as an animate being:

> O Nature! Thou hast fed
> My lofty speculations; and in thee,
> For this uneasy heart of ours, I find
> A never-failing principle of joy
> And purest passion.[72]

A bond between man and nature exists in two forms: first, nature acts upon man, providing a source of vision and enlightenment; and second, man projects his own feelings into the universe.

> This ideal of an intuitive fusion between man and nature, even if it amounted to what has since been termed "pathetic fallacy," is a cardinal feature of Romantic poetry. Nature is everywhere in sympathy with the poet, sharing his joys and, more often, his sorrows.[73]

This relationship is not always positive and, in some instances, is totally lacking. At times, nature is depicted as indifferent, hostile, or even demonic, as in Tieck's Blonde Eckbart (1796), Coleridge's Christabel (1797), or Vigny's Maison du berger (1844).

The structure of the Romantic nature lyric embodies this new attitude toward nature. As W.K. Wimsatt concludes in his study of Romantic nature imagery, "the common feature of the romantic nature

poets was to read meanings into landscape."[74] Such a thought process leads Coleridge to write in This Lime-tree Bower my Prison (1797):

> So my friend
> Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
> Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing around
> On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
> Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
> As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
> Spirits perceive his presence.[75]

or Hugo to say in Le Matin (1822):

> Le voile du matin sur les monts se déploie.
> Vois, un rayon naissant blanchit la vieille tour;
> Et déjà dans les cieux s'unit avec amour,
> Ainsi que la gloire à la joie,
> Le premier chant des bois aux premiers feux du jour.[76]

The Romantics did not, however, tend to superimpose this meaning on the landscape, for "it was embodied naturally and without the explicit religious or philosophical statements which one will find in classical or Christian instances."[77] In other words, when Romantic nature poetry comes to a religious or philosophical conclusion, it evolves towards it through the imagery, rather than using pre-existing concepts of the Absolute.

As a distinctive feature of the Romantic meditative nature lyric, Meyer Abrams sees a repeated out-in-out process, in which mind confronts nature and their interplay constitutes the poem. This interplay may be seen in many poems, such as Coleridge's This Lime-tree Bower my Prison (1797), Brentano's Abendständchen (1803), or Lamartine's Isolement (1818). Abrams describes the way in which such a poem operates. The speaker begins, he says, with a landscape description, and

> an aspect or change of aspect in the landscape evokes a varied but integral process of memory, thought, anticipation, and feeling which remains closely intervolved with

> the outer scene. In the course of this meditation the lyric speaker achieves an insight, faces up to a tragic loss, comes to a moral decision, or resolves an emotional problem. Often the poem rounds upon itself to end where it began, at the outer scene, but with an altered mood and deepened understanding which is the result of the intervening meditation.[78]

This movement may be illustrated by Lamartine's Isolement. From the outer scene--the poet seated under an oak tree on a mountain or wandering at hazard through the countryside, watching the sunset--the poem moves to the central problem: the sense of loss, isolation, and sad memories evoked by the familiar landscape:

> Mais à ces doux tableaux mon âme indifférente
> N'éprouve devant eux ni charme, ni transports,
> Je contemple la terre, ainsi qu'une ombre errante:
> Le soleil des vivants n'échauffe plus les morts.[79]

From this sense of being out of joint with his surroundings, of no longer desiring anything of the universe (l.36), the poet comes to a solution, albeit negative:

> Mais peut-être au delà des bornes de sa sphère,
> Lieux où le vrai soleil éclaire d'autres cieux,
> Si je pouvais laisser ma dépouille à la terre,
> Ce que j'ai tant rêvé paraîtrait à mes yeux?[80]

The poem then ends up once more with the outer scene which is now, however, regarded differently. In his desire for escape through death, the poet wants to be united with the destructive elements of nature:

> Quand la feuille des bois tombe dans la prairie,
> Le vent du soir se lève et l'arrache aux vallons;
> Et moi, je suis semblable à la feuille flétrie:
> Emportez-moi comme elle, orageux aquilons![81]

Although Romantic attitudes toward nature vary greatly, and no uniformity of emphasis can be found in individual writers, the interest in this theme nevertheless reflects a basic element of the Romantic

Weltanschauung: "the great endeavor to overcome the split between subject and object, the self and the world, the conscious and the unconscious."[82]

In his Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur (1808), A.W. Schlegel characterized the poetry of the past as "die des Besitzes", and that of the present as "die der Sehnsucht:" "jene steht fest auf dem Boden der Gegenwart, diese wiegt sich zwischen Erinnerung und Ahndung."[83] One of the effects of this Sehnsucht is revealed in the impulse to escape from the known world of the present and to seek out either the past or faraway places. Dépaysement in time or place, or exoticism (the term we shall use to designate both phenomena), is a common theme in German, English, and French Romantic writing. Inspired by the middle ages, for instance, Wackenroder created his Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders (1796) and Novalis, his Heinrich von Ofterdingen (1802); Coleridge composed his medieval ballad Christabel (1797) and, in Kubla Khan (1798) created an exotic world of the imagination; Victor Hugo celebrated medieval scenes and ruins, such as those of Montfort-L'Amaury (1825),[84] and made the exoticism of the east the subject of his Orientales (1829).

> Tout ce qui dépayse, tout ce qui fait connaître d'autres échantillons de la multiple humanité comme de la variété infinie de la nature, satisfait cette soif d'évasion et de renouvellement dont nous avons parlé.[85]

The imaginative search after the unusual or the picturesque is not the only impulse behind exoticism; it may also be a manifestation of idealism: "La croyance en un moyen âge naïf et vertueux s'y fond

avec le dogme, hérité de Rousseau, d'une humanité primitive innocente et pure." This idealization of the past extended, although by no means universally, to religion. German writers laid a particularly strong emphasis on religious inspiration derived from the middle ages.

> Chacun dans une tonalité différente, Tieck, Wackenroder et Novalis ont pour idéal commun un moyen âge naïvement chrétien, dont l'art pieux exprime des tendances mystiques.[87]

To a smaller extent, similar tendencies may be seen in French and English literature; for example, in Chateaubriand's Génie du Christianisme (1802) and in Scott's novels on the crusades.

Another reflection of Sehnsucht is found in dejection or melancholy. Through its emphasis on the dynamic and on totality, Romanticism pursued absolute ideals, and laid, moreover, great demands on the individual. Left without an external principle of order, man was forced to find this within himself, often without success. As René Canat comments, "Avec l'impuissance du sentiment à étreindre l'infini, on a connu la faiblesse de l'imagination à renouveler les rêves."[88] Coleridge's Dejection Ode (1802) voices this dilemma:

> I may not hope from outward forms to win
> The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.[89]

Overcome by a sense of sterility, the poet finds himself alienated from both himself and the outside world. He describes his melancholy as

> A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
> A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
> Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
> In word, or sigh, or tear--[90]

In its various expressions, melancholy is not an uncommon feature of

Romantic writing:

> L'âme romantique n'est pas, en général, joyeuse, confiante, optimiste. Elle souffre de son désaccord avec le monde, de sa noblesse incomprise, de ses déceptions devant la vie, de son idéal irréalisable, de ses blessures d'amour-propre et surtout d'amour. Elle se plaît à sa tristesse, elle goûte un sombre plaisir à se sentir souffrir--souffrance de choix, privilège des élus,--et à analyser son mal.[91]

In spite of the melancholy bent of much Romantic writing, however, some attempt is made to achieve a synthesis. In the face of time and loss, for instance, Wordsworth turns to nature for solace in Tintern Abbey (1798) or The Prelude (1805), as does Lamartine in Le Lac (1820); Novalis surmounts alienation through death by aspiration after a higher unity in Hymnen an die Nacht (1800); or Vigny takes solace in his own superiority and in the possibility that a future age may recognize his genius in La Bouteille jetée à la mer (1854). When a synthesis is no longer sought, and idealism disappears, a work may no longer be characterized as "Romantic," Canat maintains:

> Les romantiques, à mesure qu'ils se détachaient de la société, portèrent ailleurs leur besoin d'intimité: un des caractères de l'âme romantique, c'est l'exaltation d'une trilogie, Dieu, la Nature, la Femme. Ils écoutèrent ces "voix" du dehors qui leur apportaient l'apaisement.
>
> Le romantisme meurt le jour où ils n'entendirent plus ces voix.[92]

Romanticism is thus highly concerned with the relationship between the self and the world, and one way of affirming the creative independence of the mind is through Romantic irony. At this point a distinction between the use of irony as a rhetorical or narrative technique, dating from the Classicial times, and the Romantic use is essential.

Harald Weinrich differentiates the two forms in Ritter's Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie. In Romanticism,

> die Ironie wird hier nicht bloß also erzählerische Technik aufgefaßt, sondern als eine poetische Grundhaltung, die für die gebrochene Modernität der neueren Literatur konstitutiv ist und mit dem Erzählen in epischer Behaglichkeit, wie es die Alten liebten, gleichrangig ist. . . Schlegel meint mit seinem Ironie-Begriff nicht mehr die nunmehr als trivial empfundene rhetorische Figur, sondern ein "philosophisches Vermögen", und eine Philosophie, die sich der Grenzen ihrer Sagbarkeit bewußt wird, ist ihm überhaupt die "eigentliche Heimat der Ironie." Die Erhebung der Poesie zur Philosophie geschieht in der Weise, daß die romantische Poesie als "progressive Universalpoesie" das entwerfende Vermögen (Genialität) und das urteilende Vermögen (Kritik) ständig miteinander mischt und verquickt, so daß der nervöse Geist des romantischen Autors in keiner "platten Harmonie" zur Ruhe kommen kann.[93]

Romantic irony is in essence an attempt to approach critically one's own inspiration, to exercise control over caprice, to temper the serious with the playful, and to examine ideals skeptically. This does not lead, however, to limitation for, like many elements of the Romantic Weltanschauung, the concept of irony is based on the ideal of a dynamic and total world view. René Bourgeois describes it as "une affirmation de la toute-puissance créatrice du sujet pensant."[94] This affirmation is itself only temporary:

> . . . le mouvement de l'ironie fait que l'esprit ne peut s'arrêter à un seul terme, et accomplit un incessant va-et-vient entre le fini et l'infini, le déterminé et l'indéterminé, tel que chaque négation suscite immédiatement une tentative de synthèse créatrice. . . Si le mouvement s'arrête, l'ironie disparaît, et ainsi toute possibilité d'une compréhension totale de la réalité extérieure et intérieure.[95]

Paradox is central to the suggestion that the world must be both affirmed and negated, to give rise, in turn, to a new process of affirmation and

negation. Through this constant awareness of the polarities of existence, the artist arrives at a conception of the unity and the multeity of the universe:

> Wir müssen uns über unsre eigne Liebe erheben, und was wir anbeten, in Gedanken vernichten können; sonst fehlt uns, was wir auch für andre Fähigkeiten haben, der Sinn für das Weltall.[96]

By means of constant "Selbstschöpfung" and "Selbstvernichtung"[97] the ideal of "eternal becoming" (c.f. Athenäumsfragment 116) is incorporated. Poems of the past and present which are infused with this spirit of irony rise infinitely above all limitations, writes Schlegel in Lyzeumsfragment 42:

> Es lebt in ihnen eine wirkliche transzendentale Buffonerie. Im Innern, die Stimmung, welche alles übersieht, und sich über alles Bedingte unendlich erhebt, auch über eigne Kunst, Tugend, oder Genialität: im Äußern, in der Ausführung die mimische Manier eines gewöhnlichen guten italiänischen Buffo.[98]

The creator of a "transcendental comedy" is spectator and actor at once: not only does he detach himself to observe the external world from a distance, but also, he takes part in the play, observing himself while acting.[99] Romantic irony must not, however, be equated with negativism or absolute scepticism, both of which are immobile: it exists only through movement,[100] and moves, moreover, beyond or away from the world only with a view of returning to it:

> L'ironie est donc bien une "ivresse de la subjectivité transcendentale," si l'on admet cependant que la liberté de l'ironie s'exerce à partir du monde en vue d'un retour au monde, et non contre le monde. Si l'ironie est un pouvoir de jeu, c'est qu'elle accepte les règles de ce jeu.[101]

An exhaustive discussion of the definition of Romanticism, the characteristics of Romantic lyrical style, and of the attributes of Romantic nature poetry, exoticism, melancholy, irony, and of the poetic function cannot, of course, be attempted within the limitations of this study. The foregoing summary has rather been aimed at establishing points of reference for the study of selected works by Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier.

NOTES

[1] François Jost, "Romantique: Le Leçon d'un mot," Essais de littérature comparée (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1968), p. 255.

[2] H.H.H. Remak, "West European Romanticism: Definition and Scope," Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective, ed. N. Stallknecht and Horst Frey (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1961, rev. 1971), pp. 228-33.

[3] Ibid., p. 238-49.

[4] Ibid., p. 237.

[5] Friedrich Schlegel, "Athenäumsfragment 116," Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel Ausgabe, hrsg. von Ernst Behler et al., Bd. II (München: F. Schöningh, 1959 ff.), p. 182.

[6] John Keats, "Sleep and Poetry," Poetical Works, ed. H. Garrod (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958), p. 56, l. 200.

[7] Schlegel, Athenäumsfragment 116, Bd. II, p. 182.

[8] Ibid., p. 182-3.

[9] Ibid., p. 182.

[10] Ibid., p. 183.

[11] William Wordsworth, "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads," The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. E. De Selincourt and R. Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940-49), II, p. 395.

[12] Ibid., p. 395.

[13] Ibid., p. 396.

[14] Victor Hugo, "Préface de Cromwell," Oeuvres complètes, ed. J. Massin (Paris: Le Club Français du Livre, 1967-70), III, p. 50.

[15] Ibid., p. 50. Victor Hugo is, of course, greatly indebted to Mme de Staël's De la littérature (1800).

[16] René Wellek, "Romanticism Re-Examined," Concepts of Criticism (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), p. 220.

[17] Ibid., p. 221.

[18] See Remak, pp. 238-49.

[19] Remak's estimation of the importance of Romantic irony in German, French, and English literature is conservative. With reference to French Romantic irony, he only mentions Musset, and only Byron in England.

[20] Some studies exist, however, within national literatures: c.f. E. Barat, Le Style poétique et la revolution romantique (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1968, rpt. of Paris, 1904); R.A. Foakes, The Romantic Assertion (London: Methuen, 1958); Ernő Kenéz, Le Problème du style dans la critique romantique (1815-30) (Budapest, 1939); Hermann Petrich, Drei Kapitel vom romantischen Stil (Osnabrück, 1964, rpt. of 1878); and, most useful, L. Gáldi, "Lyrical Style in Neo-Latin Romantic Literatures," European Romanticism, ed. I. Sőtér and I. Neupokoyeva (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977), 389-474.

[21] Percy B. Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry," Complete Works, ed. R. Ingpen and W.E. Peck (London: Benn, 1965), VII, p. 135.

[22] Schlegel, II, p. 182.

[23] Wordsworth, II, p. 385-6.

[24] Ibid., p. 384.

[25] Ibid., p. 390.

[26] Ibid., p. 388-9.

[27] Ibid., p. 398.

[28] "Advertisement to the Lyrical Ballads," Ibid., p. 383.

[29] Lilian Furst, Romanticism in Perspective (London: Macmillan, 1969), p. 38.

[30] Victor Hugo, "Réponse à un acte d'accusation," (1834) Contemplations, pp. 494-500; Poésie, ed. B. Leuillot (Paris: Seuil, 1972) I, pp. 641-4.

[31] Ibid., I, p. 86.

[32] Ibid., I, p. 86

[33] Ibid., I, 86.

[34] F.L. Lucas, The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1948), p. 50.

[35] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare and other English Poets, ed. T. Ashe (London: Bohn's Standard Library, 1904), p. 48.

[36] Albert Gérard, L'Idée romantique de la poésie en Angleterre (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1955), p. 330.

[37] Ibid., p. 331.

[38] Ibid., p. 331.

[39] M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Oxford, 1953), p. 69.

[40] Northrop Frye, "The Drunken Boat," Romanticism Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute, (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1966), p. 8.

[41] Ibid., p. 14.

[42] See R.A. Foakes, The Romantic Assertion (London: Methuen, 1958), p. 44.

[43] Mme de Staël, De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales, ed. Paul Van Tieghem (Genève: Droz, 1959), I, p. 49.

[44] See Petrich, p. 19.

[45] Ludwig Tieck, Werke. Bd. I: Frühe Erzählungen, hrsg. von Marianne Thalmann (München: Winkler, 1963), p. 741-2.

[46] Foakes, p. 49.

[47] Gáldi, p. 393.

[48] See Gáldi, p. 393; also Henri Peyre, "Romanticism and Sincerity", Literature and Sincerity (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 111-39.

[49] See Gáldi, p. 401-5.

[50] Alphonse de Lamartine, "Le Lac", Méditations poètiques, ed. G. Lanson (Paris: Hachette, 1915), I p. 139, l. 45-8.

[51] See Gáldi, p. 414.

[52] Gáldi, p. 447.

[53] Paul Van Tieghem, Le Romantisme dans la littérature européanne (Paris: A. Michel, 1948), p. 392.

[54] Hugo, Préface (1856) to Contemplations, Poésie, I, p. 634.

[55] Van Tieghem, p. 405.

[56] C.f. Hölderlin's Patmos (1803; 1. Fassung; printed 1808), Wordsworth's Resolution and Independence (1802), and Vigny's Mont du loup (1843).

[57] Van Tieghem, p. 434-5.

[58] Furst, p. 56.

[59] See Maurice Z. Schroder, Icarus: The Image of the Artist in French Romanticism (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1961), p. 1.

[60] Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis), Novalis Schriften, hrsg. von Paul Kluckhohn und Richard Samuel, Bd. 2 (Stuttgart; W. Kohlhammer, 1960-75), p. 441.

[61] Lamartine, La Chute d'un Ange, 'Huitième vision,' (Paris: Gosselin, 1838) II, p. 68.

[62] Ibid., p. 68.

[63] Ibid., p. 69.

[64] Ibid., p. 69.

[65] Ibid., p. 69.

[66] Wordsworth, Poetical Works, II, pp. 387-8.

[67] Ibid., p. 388.

[68] Ibid., p. 388.

[69] Wordsworth, Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960), p. 494.

[70] See Furst, pp. 83-96.

[71] See Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background (London: Chatto and Windus, 1940).

[72] Wordsworth, The Prelude, Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, Bk. II, l. 447-451.

[73] Furst, p. 89.

[74] W.K. Wimsatt, The Verbal Icon (London: Methuen, 1970; first pub. 1954), p. 110.

[75] S.T. Coleridge, This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison, Complete Poetical Works, ed. E.H. Coleridge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), I, p. 180, l. 37-43.

[76] Hugo, "Le Matin", Odes et Ballades, Poésie, I, p. 162, l. 1-5.

[77] Wimsatt, p. 110.

[78] M.H. Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric," From Sensibility to Romanticism, ed. F.W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. 527.

[79] Lamartine, "L'Isolement," Méditations poétiques, I, p. 12, l. 17-20.

[80] Ibid., p. 14-15, l. 37-40.

[81] Ibid., p. 17-18, l. 49-52.

[82] Wellek, "Romanticism Re-Examined,", p. 221.

[83] A.W. Schlegel, Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur, kritische Ausgabe, hrsg. von G.V. Amoretti, Bd. I (Bonn und Leipzig: Schroeder, 1923), p. 13.

[84] Hugo, Odes et Ballades, Poésie, I, pp. 168-9.

[85] Van Tieghem, p. 289.

[86] Ibid., p. 297.

[87] Ibid., 300.

[88] René Canat, Une Forme du mal du siècle: Du sentiment de la solitude morale chez les romantiques et les parnassiens (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1967; rpt. of Paris, 1904), p. 13.

[89] Coleridge, Poetical Works, I, p. 365, l. 44-5.

[90] Ibid., p. 364, l. 21-4.

[91] Van Tieghem, p. 273.

[92] Canat, p. 203.

[93] Harald Weinrich, "Ironie," Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie, hrsg. von J. Ritter und Karlfried Gründer (Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1976), col. 579.

[94] René Bourgeois, L'Ironie romantique: Spectacle et jeu de Mme de Staël à Gérard de Nerval (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1974), p. 30. On Romantic irony, see also Morton Gurewitch, "European Romantic Irony", diss. Columbia Univ., 1957; Bernhard Heimrich, Fiktion und Fiktionsironie in Theorie und Dichtung der deutschen Romantik (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1968); Stuart M. Sperry, "Toward a Definition of Romantic Irony in English Literature", Romantic and Modern: Revaluations of Literary Tradition, ed. G. Bornstein (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), pp. 3-28: and, most comprehensive, Ingrid Strohschneider-Kohrs, Die romantische Ironie in Theorie und Gestaltung (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1960; rpt. 1977).

[95] Bourgeois, p. 30-31.

[96] Friedrich Schlegel, Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel Ausgabe, II, p. 131.

[97] Ibid., Lyzeumsfragment 37, II, p. 151.

[98] Ibid., Lyzeumsfragment 42, II, p. 151.

[99] See Bourgeois, p. 246.

[100] See Bourgeois, p. 47.

[101] See Bourgeois, p. 31.

CHAPTER TWO

JOSEPH VON EICHENDORFF

> Mit Eichendorff gewinnt die Romantik einen sozusagen veränderten Agregatzustand. Während sie in der Frühromantik etwas schwer Errungenes ist, hat sie für Eichendorff den Charakter eines natürlichen Besitzes. Er übernimmt die Romantik, ohne sie erkämpft zu haben, und darum ist er nicht nur, wie wir zunächst gesagt haben, Erbe, sondern er ist auch bereits Epigone.[1]

With Joseph von Eichendorff, German Romanticism takes both old and new forms. Eichendorff, like the early Romantics, combines sensibility with great lyrical power. His poetry is simple, evocative, and seemingly spontaneous. On the other hand, he is different from the earlier generation of Romantic poets. A certain distance has crept in. Romantic motifs, modes of expression, and states of feeling enter more or less mechanically. Romanticism has become self-conscious. As Korff comments above, Eichendorff is an inheritor and not an originator of Romanticism. This inevitably affects both the style and content of his poetry. Although he does not rebel against the Romantic tradition, combining ever anew the old Romantic "Versatzstücke",[2] he is already a poet of a different temperament. The relative tranquillity of his poetry is, as Tymms observes, far removed from Novalis's "simultaneously metaphysical and erotic mysticism" and from Brentano's "sultry ardours of sensuality" and "revulsions of bitter remorse and nostalgia for spirituality."[3] Eichendorff's poetry combines, as Korff has said, an eternal mood of youthfulness with a calculated appeal to popular sentiment, or Volkstümlichkeit.[4] Inspired, like other poets of his age, by the Wunderhorn, he

takes up popular themes in the rhythms of the old German folk song.[5] For this reason, his poetry achieves a popularity equalled by that of few other major poets.[6]

While Eichendorff's poetry possesses great popular appeal, it differs from that of the earlier Romantics in its lack of personal emphasis. "Er hat es abgelehnt, die Dichtung zum Instrument der Selbstbespiegelung, der Selbstentblössung oder der Selbstzerfleischung zu machen."[7] Complexities of character and conflicting states of the spirit are, according to Richard Alewyn, largely foreign to Eichendorff, and when he does take "den von Novalis geforderten geheimnisvollen Weg nach innen"[8] he arrives at solutions derived from a pre-existing concept of the common good of humanity, rather than from his individual vision.[9]

On a superficial level, Eichendorff's poem An die Dichter (1811) (E, I, 110) expresses similar views of the poetic function and rôle as many works of the early Romantics. To say, "Der Dichter ist das Herz der Welt" (1.28) or to call him "der schöne Liebling der Natur" (1.32) is to repeat well-known formulae of the Frühromantiker, for whom poetry, through its creator, revealed the essence and the fullness of existence. The poet is, in short, a man of special vision.

The difference between Eichendorff and early Romantic poets is, however, already apparent in the first stanza, which confronts the reader with a set of absolute moral values: true intentions, honest endeavour, and proper disposition:

> Wo treues Wollen, redlich Streben
> Und rechten Sinn der Rechte spürt,
> Das muß die Seele ihm erheben,
> Das hat mich jedesmal gerührt.
> (1. 1-4)

The strongly moralistic tone continues in a five-stanza tirade against the fallen state of society as, in a Romantic gesture of nostalgia, Eichendorff recalls a past golden age. His commentary on the present is harshly negative: "So gnadenlos ist unsre Zeit," he says in stanza two (l.8), echoing this statement later with "Nun ist so alt und schwach die Zeit" (St. 6, l.22). Faith, glory, and beauty are gone (St. 2), and simplicity (Einfalt) has been driven from her home:

> O Einfalt, gut in frommen Herzen,
> Du züchtig schöne Gottesbraut!
> Dich schlugen sie mit frechen Scherzen,
> Weil dir von ihrer Klugheit graut.
> (l. 9-12)

In this stanza, Eichendorff sets up a naïve ideal of piety, as opposed to sophistication and intellectualism (l.12). Stanza five continues to present an ideal of childlike innocence, introducing the well-known Romantic topos of communion with nature in simple surroundings. Significantly, however, these surroundings are also sheltered ("den alten Garten"), thus reflecting Eichendorff's preference for the tranquil rather than the tormented, demonic side of nature:

> Wo findest du den alten Garten,
> Dein Spielzeug, wunderbares Kind,
> Der Sterne heil'ge Redensarten,
> Das Morgenrot, den frischen Wind?
> (l. 17-20)

The mood of Sehnsucht after a lost golden age reaches its climax in the first two lines of stanza six:

> Wie hat die Sonne schön geschienen!
> Nun ist so alt und schwach die Zeit;
> (l. 21-2)

New hope is, however, injected in the two concluding lines of the stanza

("Wie stehst so jung du unter ihnen, / Wie wird mein Herz mir stark und weit!") (l. 23-4) and is continued in the tone of moral resolution in the remaining stanzas. From the bleakness of present-day society, Eichendorff moves on to his concept of the poet's mission which, significantly, is expressed once more in terms of piety and duty:

> Der Dichter kann nicht mit verarmen:
> Wenn alles um ihn her zerfällt,
> Hebt ihn ein göttliches Erbarmen--
> Der Dichter ist das Herz der Welt.
> (l. 25-8)

As the "heart of the world", the poet has a moral obligation to perpetuate forgotten ideals. The power of his songs, stanza eight goes on to say, will reveal the traces of God in earthly creation, and provide enlightenment to a blind age. Once more, the privileged rôle of the poet is emphasized:

> Den blöden Willen aller Wesen,
> Im Irdischen des Herren Spur,
> Soll er durch Liedeskraft erlösen,
> Der schöne Liebling der Natur.
> (l. 29-32)

The suggestion that the poet has the power to read the secrets of the universe is a central theme in Eichendorff's poetry, and has one of its best-known expressions in the short poem, Wünschelrute (1835):

> Schläft ein Lied in allen Dingen,
> Die da träumen fort und fort,
> Und die Welt hebt an zu singen,
> Triffst du nur das Zauberwort.
> (E, I, 112)

This poem, like the above stanza of An die Dichter, expresses in somewhat mystical terms a belief in the basic harmony of the universe, which can be deciphered and animated through the poetic power. Once again, the idea of

the universe as a living unity is not new to the Romantic mind. A shift of emphasis has, however, taken place. Where earlier Romantics were concerned with a constant quest after unity in multeity, Eichendorff concentrates on moral values. Although the universe comes alive through the poet's visionary power, his imagination is kept well in check by the traditional virtues of duty and piety. The poet's function is seen here as didactic:

> Drum has ihm Gott das Wort gegeben,
> Das kühn das Dunkelste benennt,
> Den frommen Ernst im reichen Leben,
> Die Freudigkeit, die keiner kennt.
> (1. 33-36)

Romantic idealism takes up a static quality as Eichendorff speaks of the poet's obligation to uphold honour and to expose shame (st. 11) and to avoid idleness, falsehood, and frivolity (st. 12) all through the strength of the poetic word:

> Da soll er singen frei auf Erden,
> In Lust und Not auf Gott vertraun,
> Daß aller Herzen freier werden
> Eratmend in die Klänge schaun.
> (1. 37-40)

The poem ends with a vision of a new millennium, expressed in the symbols of light and nature:

> Den Morgen seh' ich ferne scheinen,
> Die Ströme ziehn im grünen Grund,
> Mir ist so wohl! --Die's ehrlich meinen,
> Die grüß ich all' aus Herzensgrund.
> (1. 57-60)

Although An die Dichter does not deny the power of the poetic vision, it presents the poet within well-defined limits. He is an instrument for the articulation of absolute standards of piety, duty, truth and beauty

superimposed by religion. The tensions of earlier Romantic writing are gone. In place of the previous tendency to view art as eternal growth and striving, Eichendorff imposes definite boundaries. For him, poetic creating is, at least ostensibly, a matter of propagating religious values. Although poetry is the result of inspiration and inner vision, it nevertheless expresses pre-existing standards and often depicts a basically harmonious world. The poet's personality has also been subordinated to his moral obligations. He is not the solitary, hypersensitive hero of Novalis's Hymnen an die Nacht or Lamartine's Chute d'un ange; rather, he is an upright guardian of his society.

The difference between Eichendorff and the earlier generation of German Romantics is reconfirmed in his critical writing. As we have observed in An die Dichter, he approaches Romantic ideas with caution, and his desire for religious orthodoxy comes out once more in Die Geschichte der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands (1857). Religion and poetry, he reiterates, must be welded, "denn die wahre Poesie ist durchaus religiös, und die Religion poetisch, und eben diese geheimnisvolle Doppelnatur beider darzustellen, war die große Aufgabe der Romantik." (E, IV, 400-01). Eichendorff then goes on to point out ways in which Romantics failed in this mission. First, he says, they fell prey to the temptation of pantheism inherent in the Naturphilosophie:

> Denn indem diese Philosophie alles unter dem Absoluten als eines zusammenfaßte, lag der extreme Irrtum nicht gar fern, welcher wie Gott in der Welt, so die Welt und mithin auch jedes einzelne in jener allschaffenden, sich stets neugebärenden Weltkraft aufgehen läßt.
>
> (E, IV, p. 401)

Romanticism, separated from the positive influences of Catholicism, laid

itself open to the anarchy of the writer's whim, marked by a fascination with negativism: "Es entstand in dem Feldlager Unisicherheit und Verwirrung, und aus dieser Verwirrung, weil sie den Nerv des Ganzen traf, jene innere Zerrissenheit" (E, IV, 403). Second, the Romantics overemphasized the aesthetic elements of poetry. Following the example of Tieck, who possessed a dangerous indifference to religion, the Romantics injected art with irony, which in turn led to a concentration on the purely formal elements of poetry (c.f. E, IV, 402). The caprice of the individual dominated:

> Ja der scharfe Akzent, den sie hiernach einseitig auf die bloße Form legten, und die darin erlangte Meisterschaft mußte, weil hier das Talent willkürlich zu schaffen schien, ihrerseits wiederum zu einer aristokratischen Selbstvergötterung, zu dem Genie-Kultus führen, der in manchen romantischen Dichtungen fast ausschließlich gefeiert wird.
>
> (E, IV, 403)

Eichendorff's solution to the malaise of negativism, egotism, personal conflict, and form without worthy content is, as in An die Dichter, accomplished through a return to the values of Catholicism, and, he emphasizes, "nicht durch juvenile Wiedererweckung der Romantik" (E, IV, 419). He proposes to replace negative poetry with positive, placing "Gesundheit und Freudigkeit gegen blasierte Zerrissenheit, fromme Naturwahrheit gegen gespreizte Lüge, eine Poesie der Liebe gegen die Poesie des Hasses" (E, IV, 419).

Both in his poem An die Dichter and in Die Geschichte der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands, therefore, Eichendorff is critical of the Romantic Movement. Although he has accepted the concept of the vatic rôle of the poet and, to a certain extent, the Schellingian Naturphilosophie, he has

rejected the directions eventually taken by Romanticism. This mixture of sympathy and condemnation is indicative, concludes Otto Keller in his study of Eichendorff as a critic of Romanticism, of the simultaneous attraction and repulsion that the movement exercised over him.

> So sehen wir, wie Eichendorff verschiedene Möglichkeiten romantischen Daseins in sich trägt. Einerseits drängt es ihn mächtig, sich allem Bezaubernden unbedingt hinzugeben, in höchster Lust eins zu werden mit ihm. Es lockt ihn, alles Beschränkende hinter sich zu lassen, um vorbehaltlos in der Fülle des Irdischen in einem Hochgefühl ein Unendliches zu umfassen. Doch verbindet sich mit diesem Hochgefühl ein Gefühl des Abgrundes. Höchste Lust mengt sich mit tödlichem Entsetzen, das oft überhand zu nehmen droht. Aber immer wieder wird das Redrohende bei Eichendorff von einer Fülle des Glaubens überflutet. Die Gnade eines weiten christlichen Weltgefühls wird ihm immer wieder zuteil. Sie vermag vor den Kräften des Abgrundes zu bewahren, wenn man sich ihr nur hingibt. Sie bedeutet für den Dichter Eichendorff einen letzten Halt gegen alle romantische Gefahr.[10]

The extent of this ambivalence can only be determined by an examination of his poems.[11]

Zwielicht (1815)[12], one of Eichendorff's earliest poems, offers a complexity seldom to be found in his later poetry, and for this reason it is of interest in the discussion of the poet's development. Lack of harmony between the self and the external world, or the sensation of a gap between ideals and reality lies, as shown, at the core of Romantic melancholy, and this type of fragmentation evinces itself in Zwielicht. In his emphasis on the duality of the universe and on a demonic presence in nature, Eichendorff shows a considerable affinity with earlier writers such as Jean Paul or Tieck, and with contemporaries such as Fouqué, Chamisso, or E.T.A. Hoffmann. Zwielicht probes the ambiguities in the world of nature and of man, focusing on the double faces of appearance

and reality, security and threat. Oskar Seidlin comments that this is a poem which "die Gestalten der erzählten Welt verzweifacht, aber sie gerade dadurch, daß es sie schief und als andere reflektiert, dem Schrecken und Identitätsverlust des Zwielichts preisgibt."[13]

The first stanza evokes a dark landscape and the heaviness of nightmares:

> Dämmrung will die Flügel spreiten,
> Schaurig rühren sich die Bäume,
> Wolken ziehn wie schwere Träume--
> Was will dieses Graun bedeuten?
> (E, I, 11)

Nature is animated with horror as dusk prepares to spread out dark wings, the trees shiver, and clouds move across the sky like heavy dreams. The final question, which asks the meaning of this frightening twilight, summarizes the fear and confusion of the three preceding lines. In simple, seemingly spontaneous language, the poet combines a number of characteristic Romantic motifs, such as the concept of animated nature, the fascination with darkness and horror, and the projection of human feelings into the universe, all of which flow together with great facility.

From description, the poem shifts to admonition in the next two stanzas. To show the savagery and duplicity of the universe, stanza two brings in the symbol of the roe deer, which must not be allowed to graze alone, unprotected from hunters. A sense of urgency enters into the stanza as the poet admonishes:

> Hast ein Reh du lieb vor andern,
> Laß es nicht alleine grasen
> (l. 5-6)

This grammatical structure is parallelled by the first two lines of

stanza three:

> Hast du einen Freund hienieden,
> Trau ihm nicht zu dieser Stunde.
> (1. 9-10)

Not only is the wood full of unknown treachery in the form of hunters, but friends may also have a double face:

> Freundlich wohl mit Aug' und Munde,
> Sinnt er Krieg im tück'schen Frieden.
> (1. 11-12)

The half-light of dusk thus symbolizes a time of crisis, and in his description, Eichendorff takes up the earlier Romantic themes of Waldeinsamkeit and Weltangst. Stanza four, however, shows a tendency to resolve the dichotomy of man and the outside world by means of "personellen Auflösung" rather than "personalen Konzentration" or "Ichbewußtsein." As Korff says, "Eichendorffs Ich hat die Tendenz, sich aufzulösen in einem größeren Ganzen, einem überpersönlichen Es, das der Mensch als seinen eigentlichen Grund begreift."[15] From the personal perplexity of the first three stanzas, Eichendorff moves to the extraneous security of an Absolute. Stanza four consists of a series of didactic truths which, instead of evolving from the questionings of the previous stanzas, are drawn from a pre-existing set of beliefs. The poet expresses first a faith in regeneration:

> Was heut' müde gehet unter,
> Hebt sich morgen neugeboren.
> (1, 13-14)

There is, however, a danger that the soul may perish in the night. Eichendorff closes with an admonition: "Hüte dich, bleib wach und munter!" (1.16). Man, to avoid going lost in the nightmares of the

present-day twilight, must stick fast to the rules of his faith.

Both the simplicity and conservatism of this solution are typical of Eichendorff. In contrast with Brentano, who in the face of discord tends to seek extremes, he is moderate. As Renate Kienzerle writes, "Eichendorff hingegen strebt in seiner einfacheren, klaren Seele--im Vergleich zu der Brentanos--nach Verbindung, nach Gleichgerichtetem."[16]

Der Soldat (1814) (E, I, 19) possesses a feature unusual in the poetry of Eichendorff: an abrupt change of form occurs between the first and second parts. As Renate Kienzerle points out, change of rhythm and metre, although frequent in the poetry of Tieck or Brentano, are rare in the work of Eichendorff, who seldom alters his pattern midstream.[17] In spite of their diversity, both parts were composed in 1814; Part I, however, was combined with Parts I and II of Der wandernde Musikant in the collection of poems published along with Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts und das Marmorbild in 1826.[18]

In spite of its interesting qualities, this poem has been largely overlooked in studies of Eichendorff's poetry. Josef Nadler notes Eichendorff's indebtedness in Part I to the Schnadahüpfel, popularized by Brentano and Arnim.[19] This form, originally used for dance lyrics celebrating Thanksgiving harvest festivals [20] in Southern Germany and Austria, developed into "reine Stimmungslyrik, Augenblicksdichtung im höchsten Sinne."[21] Nadler remarks that Der Soldat (Part I) employs "das Wiederaufnehmen und Weiterspinnen des Gedankens einer Verszeile. . . ganz in der Art des Schnadahüpfels."[22] In this poem, the dance rhythm, as in the original form, is accentuated by the presence of two stresses, which are placed either near one another towards the middle of the line,

or sharply accentuated at the beginning and the end:[23]

Trägt im Finstern zu 'nem Schlößlein
Mich rasch noch genug.
(l. 3-4)

The first four stanzas of Der Soldat thus combine a strong dancing rhythm with a corresponding lightness of mood. Like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, Eichendorff fits together a medieval landscape: the soldier rides up smartly to a castle, where he is greeted warmly at the garden gate by a maiden of outstanding beauty. As in Brentano's Chronika eines fahrenden Schülers (Urfassung, 1804), Eichendorff creates an atmosphere of simplicity and antiquity through the use of diminutives: "Rößlein", "Schlößlein"; the gaiety of the stanzas is emphasized by strongly-pronounced rhymes: e.g. "prächtig...allnächtig", "Welt... gefällt." An ironic twist, however, enters into the third stanza. Already in the first two stanzas, the self-conscious lightness of mood suggests that the author is not entirely serious; this suggestion is confirmed in stanza three:

Und ist auch die Kleine
Nicht die Schönst' auf der Welt,
So gibt's doch just keine,
Die mir besser gefällt.
(l. 9-12)

The tone of forced levity continues in stanza four. When the soldier is overcome by Wanderlust, it is easy to leave this maiden, even if she is--at the moment--the most beautiful in the world:

Und spricht sie vom Freien:
So schwing' ich mich auf mein Roß--
Ich bleibe im Freien,
Und sie auf dem Schloß.
(l. 13-16)

Part II, however, abruptly ruptures the light tone of the preceding stanzas. From the gaiety of the Schnadahüpfel, Eichendorff switches to an almost elegaic "contemplation of the tragic aspects of life."[24] The irregular form underlines the theme of frenzied departure in the face of death:

> Wagen mußt du und flüchtig erbeuten,
> Hinter uns schon durch die Nacht hör' ich's schreiten,
> Schwing auf mein Roß dich nur schnell
> Und küß noch im Flug mich, wildschönes Kind,
> Geschwind,
> Denn der Tod ist ein rascher Gesell.
> (1. 17-22)

After the almost mechanical regularity of rhyme and the smoothness of diction in Part I, Eichendorff allows himself unusual liberties in rhyme (c.f. "erbeuten...schreiten") and line length (c.f. lines 20-1) and, through the onomatopoeic use of words, suggests the terror of flight (c.f. "Wagen", "flüchtig", "schreiten", "rascher").

Through its frenzied tone, its emphasis on the grisly aspects of death, and its picture of a flight through the night--although in this instance the lover is alive and leaves his beloved behind--Der Soldat, Part II, carries strong echoes of Bürger's Lenore (1773), which connects it, in turn, to the ballad tradition. Eichendorff's concluding line ("Denn der Tod ist ein rascher Gesell"), in particular, is reminiscent of the refrain in Lenore: "Hurra! die Toten reiten schnell!"[25]

The mood of the poem thus changes from apparent frivolity to seriousness or, to return to one of Schlegel's formulations of Romantic irony, it reveals a "philosophisches Vermögen"[26] which seeks to both affirm and negate. The narrator of this poem holds himself, in Part I,

essentially aloof from what is closest to him.[27] Part I is thus a Scherz: with an air of feigned indifference, the narrator speaks of his arrival at the castle, his friendly reception by a beautiful woman, and his unquenchable thirst for freedom. After this negation, in the form of a detached, critical observation of himself and his life, comes the affirmation: in the face of death, detachment disappears. The woman is now described as a "wildschönes Kind" whom it is difficult to leave, and the joyful wanderer becomes a desperate fugitive. In spite of the earnestness of Part II, a note of irony nevertheless again enters the concluding line: death, which the narrator is in fact fleeing, is referred to as a "comrade" or "companion" (Gesell).

Although the gap in time between Zwielicht (1811) and Sehnsucht (pub. 1834) is considerable, Eichendorff's style has not changed radically. A comparison of the two poems reveals, if anything, that Romanticism in his later work becomes even more self-conscious. While Zwielicht still contains elements of the Romantic Weltangst and preoccupation with the double, Sehnsucht is picturesque and evocative, far removed from doubt and complexity. Höllerer's comment on "Was weckst du, Frühling" in Das Marmorbild may also apply to Sehnsucht:

> Dies ist Dichtung, die einen Raum beschwört, der erfüllt ist von einer nur ihm eigenen Stimmung, einem nur ihm eigenen Gestus und einer nur ihm eigenen Rewegung. Sie zieht den Leser in diesen Raum hinein, ohne daß er zunächst sagen könnte, mit welchen Mitteln dies geschieht und wie dieser Raum beschaffen ist.[28]

The poet once again makes use of a popular Romantic theme: the Sehnsucht which Friedemann later characterized as "das Allumfassende, das Allbegründende, das Allbeherrschende der romantischen Seele."[29] The fascination of this longing lies in the impossibility of its fulfillment. In his quest on earth for something which transcends earthly existence, the Romantic is led on to perpetual movement and, ideally, perpetual growth.[30] The simplest expression of Sehnsucht is in the motif of the wanderer and, significantly, Eichendorff placed this poem in the Wanderlieder, the opening section of his collection of poems. "Er hätte es nicht charakteristischer tun konnen, denn wenn man so will, das Motiv des Wanderns ist nicht nur sein bezeichnendes Motiv, sondern auch das jenige der Romantik überhaupt."[31]

In Eichendorff's poem, however, a distance intrudes between the poetic "I" and his longing. Yearning appears in its most uncomplicated form: that of Wanderlust, exoticism, and love of beautiful sights and sounds. The first line presents a pictorial image: "Es schienen so golden die Sterne" (E, I, 35). The poetic narrator stands alone at his window and watches the stars. In the first two lines, three major Romantic motifs have already been introduced: solitude, night, and nature. Sound comes from afar to mingle with sight:

> Und hörte aus weiter Ferne
> Ein Posthorn im stillen Land.
> (I, 3-4)

Although the solitary person at the window is moved by these sights and this sound, it is not in the manner of Novalis, who makes solitude and night the background for his anguished soul-searching. Rather,

sights and sounds from afar stimulate Wanderlust:

> Das Herz mir im Leib entbrennte,
> Da hab' ich mir heimlich gedacht:
> Ach, wer da mitreisen könnte
> In der prächtigen Sommernacht!
> (l. 5-8)

In the second stanza, the poet actually sees and hears two wanderers:

> Ich hörte im Wandern sie singen
> Die stille Gegend entlang:
> (l. 11-12)

The importance attached to their song reveals the German Romantic tendency to regard music as "the highest art, the art which leads us into the dark abysses of our soul and the mystery of the world."[32] Significantly, however, no "dark abyss" of introspection results in Sehnsucht, where music simply produces a joyful Stimmung and a flight of fancy.

The poem now moves away from the poet's individual situation which has provided a springboard to a dreamworld. The remainder of the poem deals with the exotic images stimulated by the wanderers' song. The last four lines of the second stanza continue to describe the sights and sounds of wild mountain scenery: the waterfalls, forests, springs, and cliffs. The final stanza moves on to describe an artificial world of marble statues,[33] shadowed gardens, and palaces in the moonlight. In this world of the imagination evoked by song, there are also figures standing at the window listening to music, a parallel to the figure in the opening lines:

Wo die Mädchen am Fenster lauschen,
Wann der Lauten Klang erwacht
Und die Brunnen verschlafen rauschen
In der prächtigen Sommernacht.--
(1. 21-4)

Little in the imagery or the vocabulary of this poem separates it from earlier Romantic works. As in Brentano's Abendständchen (1803),[34] for instance, we have the solitary figure, the interest in night, the music in a natural setting, the vague Sehnsucht, and the contrast between light and darkness. One evocative image leads to another. Eichendorff combines these elements, however, to a considerably different effect. His poem is a Romantic picture book. He takes the ready-made vocabulary and stances of Romanticism and produces a graceful but superficial poem. The emblems of Romanticism flow together with an almost contrived neatness. Night and solitude evoke Wanderlust; singing wanderers appear and, by means of their song, the listener goes on an imaginative journey, which is neatly concluded by the picture of more listening figures at the window and the repetition of the opening line. The poem thus rounds itself off to a pointe, or what Kienzerle calls a "leise Überraschungsmoment."[35] The ending, while typical of Eichendorff's poetry, is atypical of earlier Romantic works:

> Gerade wenn wir die Schlüsse Eichendorffs betrachten, ist es auffallend, wie wenig hier von dem "romantischen" Verfließen und Verströmen zu spüren ist. Den fast immer haben seine Gedichte einen echten Abschluß, im Gegensatz zu Tieck, der gar keinen Wert auf einen rightigen Schluß legte, und allmähliches Verhallen mehr liebte. Eichendorff hingegen neigt stark zu Zielschlüssen und Pointenschlüssen, die jedoch nicht so spöttisch zugespitzt sind, wie bei Brentano.[36]

This poem follows the typical pattern of the Romantic lyric as delineated by Wimsatt and Abrams with an interesting difference. Although there is an out-in-out movement (from the stars to the solitary narrator to the expansion of a dreamworld), Eichendorff attempts to read no deep meaning into the landscape and resolves no major problems, apart from his longing after beautiful sights. The content of Sehnsucht is purely fanciful. It illustrates the elements which Höllerer has pointed out as central to Eichendorff's poetry: "die Zauberische, in der Schwebe und im Auf und Ab sich bewegende Sehnsucht nach idealer Schönheit, die sich ausströmt und die zuweilen gehemmt wird durch die Überanstrengung der Schönheitsbilder; die Eingrenzung und Verfestigung in Bilder der Idylle."[37]

Nachts (1853),[38] which Höllerer calls "eines der letzten geglückten Gedichte von Eichendorff,"[39] reveals another typical element of his poetry: "die statuarischen Bilder der christlichreligiösen abgeklärten Schönheit, in denen jene Sehnsucht sich feste Umrisse im Unendlichen schafft."[40] From the beginning, the reader is left in no doubt that this is a poem with a religious message. The poet's physical situation is a reflection of his situation in life. He stands in the shadow of the forest, as if it were the edge of life; i.e., he is now old. In the twilight of his life, the countryside is faint in the distance, and the silver stream (again a symbol of life) stretches out. God is present both in nature and in his life: church bells sound from a distance, which startles a slumbering roe--a topos for the Christian soul. Tranquillity pervades man and nature as the presence of God is

felt and seen.

Ich stehe in Waldeschatten
Wie an des Lebens Rand,
Die Länder wie dämmernde Matten,
Der Strom wie ein silbern Band.

Von fern nur schlagen die Glocken
Über die Wälder herein,
Ein Reh hebt den Kopf erschrocken
Und schlummert gleich wieder ein.

Der Wald aber rühret die Wipfel
Im Traum von der Felsenwand,
Denn der Herr geht über die Gipfel
Und segnet das stille Land.
(E, I, 102)

The timeworn Romantic scenery appears once more: night, shadowy forests, mountain peaks, and a musical sound in the silence. In spite of the picture of moving organic nature, accomplished through the analogy of life and the shadowy forest, the presence of wild-life, and the quivering tree tops, the poem has a static quality. Instead of letting the images speak for themselves, without explicit religious or philosophical statement or direct comparison, the poet inserts three similes in the first stanza: "Ich stehe in Waldesschatten / Wie an des Lebens Rand," "Die Länder wie dämmernde Matten, / Der Strom wie ein silbern Band." After the simple spontaneity of the opening line, the poem thus takes on a forced note, an example of the "Wechsel vom Verströmen ins Offene zum Verfestigen und Verhärten"[41] to which Gaudenz Ruf makes reference. This is, moreover, not an isolated instance. The poem Frische Fahrt (printed 1815), for example, opens exuberantly with "Laue Luft kommt blau geflossen" (E, I, 9); the next line, however, "dämpft die beseeligte Hingabe, und statt des berauschten Gemütes

spricht der klare Wille: 'Frühling, Frühling soll es sein!'"[42]

The second stanza of Nachts shifts back to simple, direct description. As in Sehnsucht, the traditional topoi of nature description combine with the topos of music ("Von fern nur schlagen die Glocken"). The landscape is permeated with security:

> Ein Reh hebt den Kopf erschrocken
> Und schlummert gleich wieder ein.

From the description of nature in familiar but vague terms, the poem moves self-consciously to a religious Zielschluß in the third stanza, which has nevertheless been prepared for by the preceding religious imagery. The forest is infused with the presence of God:

> Denn der Herr geht über die Gipfel
> Und segnet das stille Land.

Like Zwielicht and Sehnsucht the poem ends neatly; once more, however, the symmetry injects an air of artificiality, and a static quality dominates. In spite of the pantheistic Weltgefühl which enters the description, the poet does not react intensely with the surrounding world, preferring to see nature as a panorama set out before him. No dialogue exists between man and nature, whereby nature becomes the recipient of the speaker's feelings and, in turn, provides him with strength and inspiration; on the contrary, the poetic narrator, free from doubts or problems, looks at the natural scene and sees in it a confirmation of his ready-made belief and trust in God.

Upon looking back over the poems we have examined, we may reach several general conclusions regarding Eichendorff's diction, rhythm, and imagery. Even more than that of his Romantic precursors, his

poetry is universally understandable. His diction exemplifies Schlegel's ideal of "kunstloser Gesang" (c.f. Athenäumsfragment 116) through a simplicity which approximates that of folk poetry. His sentence structures lack the complexity and ambiguity frequently found in the poetry of Hölderlin, Novalis, or Brentano. Similarly, his metres are for the most part regular, with enough variation to impart an air of spontaneity:

Es schienen so golden die Sterne
Als ich einsam am Fenster stand
Und hörte aus weiter Ferne
Ein Posthorn im stillen Land.

Ruf summarizes:

> Eichendorff verliert sich nie in lyrischer Trunkenheit. . . wie etwa Brentano oder sein Jugendfreund Loeben. Melodiöse Zeilen wechseln immer wieder mit klanglosen Passagen, und selbst in den Gefühlsausbrüchen halten sich Hell und Dunkel die Waage.--Ebensowenig gestattet sich der Dichter in der Reimtechnik ausschweifende Freiheiten. Er betört sich nie im Klangrausch üppiger Reime, denn erlaubt sich das eine Reimpaar den Schmelz des weiblichen Ausgangs, den Sang dunkler und langer Vokale, so kompensiert bestimmt ein anderes mit den gegenteiligen Eigenschaften.[43]

An overview of Eichendorff's imagery may also lead to several conclusions. In An die Dichter he mentions "Ströme"; in Zwielicht he refers to "Flügel", "Bäume", "Wolken"; Sehnsucht speaks of "Sterne", "Felsenschlüften", "Wälder", "Quellen", and a host of other plural nouns; and Nachts mentions "Länder", "Matten", "Wälder". Eichendorff thus speaks frequently in plurals, which impart an air of generality and vagueness to his work. His eye sweeps across the landscape and seldom stops to describe specifically. This general vision may contribute to the great popular

appeal of his poetry:

> Die Gewalt, die Eichendorffs Sprache über den Leser ausübt, wie ein Lockendes, Bezauberndes, liegt zu einem wesentlichen Teil in Eichendorffs Gebrauch des Plurals. Immer sind es Wälder, Ströme, Schlösser, verschlafene Brunnen, was alles von einem Fenster aus sichtbar und hörbar wird. Alles scheint genau bestimmt und faßbar und ist doch durch den allgemeinen Begriff, der durch diesen pluralischen Gebrauch gegeben ist, in eine Distanz gerückt, die nicht mehr wirklich greifbar ist. Und so entschweben die Bilder den zugreifenden Händen in ein Unwirkliches, Unfaßbares. Sie sind aus dem Spezifischen ins Allgemeine abgerückt und haben dabei doch nicht ihre Traulichkeit und Heimeligkeit verloren.[44]

Even when the plural is not employed, Eichendorff's language tends to be abstract. In Der Soldat, for instance, the young girl is simply "die Schönst' auf der Welt"; the summer night in Sehnsucht is "prächtig", and the water in Nachts is like a "silbern Band". Eichendorff's description thus tends to be emblematic: by combining the ready-made vocabulary of Romanticism with its familiar associations, he produces evocative but indistinct pictures. As Ruf comments:

> Wohl greift Eichendorffs Phantasie zu rein lyrischen Elementen, und diese Welt scheint völlig entmaterialisiert. So empfindet er vor allem vage und flüssige Medien wie Fluß und Strom, Wind und Luft; und die wenigen festen Dinge wie Wald und Augen--auch sie kaum greifbar. . . schwimmen in solch blauem Äther.[45]

Sound and motion are more important than sight in his poetry:

> Ja, mehr als Sichtbarkeit ist die Welt Klang; der Dichter hört sie eher, als daß er sie sieht, und gibt ein Konzert von Hörnerklang, Stromesrauschen und lockenden Stimmen wieder. . . Die Schöpfung ist beseelt und vibriert im Walten eines lebendigen Geistes, von ihm zum Leben erweckt.[46]

These poems by Eichendorff, from the early, middle, and late periods of his career, illustrate the truth of Korff's statement that Eichendorff

is an inheritor and not an originator of Romanticism. In his poems, he employs Romantic vocabulary, themes, and images--albeit a Romanticism disciplined and tempered by his firm religious beliefs. The view of Eichendorff as a late Romantic who remains within his inherited tradition is shared not only by Korff, Tymms, Höllerer, and Ruf, but also, to varying degrees, by more recent critics. Egon Schwartz sees in his poetry both diversity and an "astonishing unity"[47] and notes a marked "preference for a few topics" along with "a certain conventionality of his subjects."[48] His use of already familiar themes explains his great popularity: "Eichendorff was the heir and masterful exponent of a tradition which had already penetrated all levels of the population."[49] Werner Kohlschmidt's recent commentary on Eichendorff in Die Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von der Romantik bis zum späten Goethe stresses the lack of development in his poetry. Commenting on Frische Fahrt, Kohlschmidt writes: "Frühe Lyrik des Dichters, aber bereits sein voller Ton. Er wird ihn vielfach variieren, aber nicht eigentlich entwickeln."[50] He remarks upon Eichendorff's preference for the forms made popular by his precursors, but observes that he employs them more rigidly and less inventively. At the same time, his poems reveal balance and restraint, for he does not indulge in the "Gefühlsschwärmereien"[51] of earlier Romantic poetry. In spite of the derivativeness and limited scope of his poetry, Kohlschmidt maintains, "Epigone ist er deswegen noch nicht,"[52] since his poetry does not impart the same air of mannerism as that of Uhland, for instance. Another recent evaluation by Wolfgang Nehring

remarks upon the "Mangel an Abwechslung, die dauernden Wiederholungen."[53] Nevertheless, Nehring comments that "die Dichtungen wirken keineswegs stereotyp. Es besteht ein geheimer Wiederspruch zwischen der formelhaften Darstellung und der unverbrauchten Frische, die den Werken immer wieder bestätigt wird."[54]

These evaluations are similar in that they recognize both the emblematic nature of Eichendorff's poetry and the skill with which these emblems are combined and recombined. In spite of this lyrical skill, however, Eichendorff remains a late Romantic employing well-known forms and themes. Although it may be extreme to label him an "epigone", the presence of epigonal elements in his poetry cannot be denied. As Höllerer remarks, it is easy to forget that Eichendorff was not only a contemporary of Jean Paul, the Schlegels, Brentano, and Goethe, but also of Heine, Büchner, Grabbe, Stifter, and Keller. He remains, however, with old themes:

> Eichendorff versuchte, die Landschaft der idealen Schönheit mit allen Mitteln festzuhalten, obwohl er in einer Zeit lebte, die auf dem Weg zu Baudelaires "Les Fleurs du mal" war. Es war der Weg zu einer Schönheit, die Häßlichkeit und Dissonanz nicht mehr asschloß, ein Weg, der sich ins 20. Jahrhundert fortsetzte.--In dem Versuch des Festhaltens gelangen Eichendorff zauberhafte Prosakapitel und faszinierende Gedichte. Das Unerlöste aber, die Starrheiten in Eichendorff's Dichtung, erklären sich aus der Anstrengung, etwas festzuhalten, was kaum mehr festzuhalten war.[55]

NOTES

[1] Hermann Korff, Geist der Goethezeit, T.4: Hochromantik (Leipzig: Koehler und Amelang, 1955), p. 243.

[2] Ibid., p. 243.

[3] Ralph Tymms, German Romantic Literature (London: Methuen, 1955), p. 330.

[4] See Korff, p. 243.

[5] See Tymms, p. 330.

[6] See Richard Alewyn, "Ein Wort über Eichendorff," Eichendorff Heute, hrsg. von P. Stöcklein (München: Bayerischer Schulbuch Verlag, 1966), p. 8.

[7] Ibid., p. 9.

[8] Ibid., p. 10.

[9] See Korff, p. 230.

[10] Otto Keller, Eichendorffs Kritik der Romantik (Zürich: Juris Verlag, 1954), p. 80; also on this subject, but of more limited value, is Robert Mollenauer's "Three Spätromantiker on Romanticism: Hoffmann, Heine, and Eichendorff" (Diss. Indiana Univ., 1960). For a study of the evolution of Eichendorff's concept of the poet, see Volkmar Stein's Morgenrot und falscher Glanz: Studien zur Entwicklung des Dichterbildes bei Eichendorff (Winterthur: Keller, 1964).

[11] But for the topic of this study (i.e. its limitation to Eichendorff's lyrics), an examination of Das Marmorbild (1819), which focuses on the simultaneous fascination and repulsion of the "romantische Gefahr," would also have been revealing.

[12] The date given by Baumann and Grosse for Zwielicht is 1811; Ansgar Hillach and Klaus-Dieter Krabiel in Eichendorff--Kommentar zu den Dichtungen, Bd. I (München: Winkler, 1971), p. 49 cite 1815. Since this poem was published in Ahnung und Gegenwart (1815), the latter date is used in this study.

[13] Oskar Seidlin, Versuche über Eichendorff (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1965), p. 241.

[14] Here Eichendorff makes use, according to Hillach and Krabiel, p. 49, of an old folksong motif, using the roe to symbolize the beloved.

[15] Korff, p. 230.

[16] Renate Kienzerle, Aufbauformen romantischer Lyrik aufgezeigt an Tieck, Brentano und Eichendorff. Diss. Tübingen, 1946 (Ulm: n.p., 1947), p. 67.

[17] See Kienzerle, p. 61.

[18] See Hillach and Krabiel, pp. 49-50.

[19] See Josef Nadler, Eichendorffs Lyrik. Ihre Technik und ihre Geschichte (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1973; rpt. of Prague, 1908), p. 176.

[20] See Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte, hrsg. von W. Kohlschmidt und W. Mohr, 2. Aufl. (Berlin, 1958 ff.), Bd. 3, 191-4.

[21] Nadler, p. 176.

[22] Nadler, p. 178.

[23] Nadler, p. 180.

[24] Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex Preminger et al. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), p. 215.

[25] Gottfried August Bürger, Gedichte, ausgewählt mit einem Nachwort von Jost Hermand (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1961), p. 7.

[26] Friedrich Schlegel, Marburger Handschrift, H.3., 52, Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel Ausgabe, Vol.

[27] C.f. Schlegel: "wir müssen uns über unsre Liebe erheben." Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 13.

[28] Walter Höllerer, "Schönheit und Erstarrung: Zur Problematik der Dichtung Eichendorffs," Der Deutschunterricht, 7 (1955), 94.

[29] K. Friedemann, "Die romantische Sehnsucht," Zeitschrift für deutschen Unterricht, 30 (1916), 361.

[30] See Korff, p. 240.

[31] Ibid., p. 241.

[32] René Wellek, "German and English Romanticism: A Confrontation," Studies in Romanticism, 4-5 (1964-6), 50.

[33] The motif of the marble statue figures prominently and disquietingly in Eichendorff's Marmorbild (1819).

[34] C.f. Brentano: "Hor', es klagt die Flöte wieder
Und die kühlen Brunnen rauschen,

. . .

Stille, stille, lass' uns lauschen!"

in Sämtliche Werke und Briefe, hrsg. v. J. Behrens et al. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975, vol. 1, pp. 144-45.

[35] Kienzerle, p. 75.

[36] Ibid., p. 83.

[37] Höllerer, p. 100.

[38] On the controversy concerning the correct date of this poem, see Hillach and Krabiel, p. 95-6.

[39] Höllerer, p. 101.

[40] Ibid., p. 100.

[41] Gaudenz Ruf, Wege der Spätromantik. Dichterische Verhaltensweisen in der Krise des Lyrischen (Bonn: Bouvier, 1969), p. 33.

[42] Ibid., p. 33.

[43] Ibid., p. 42.

[44] Kienzerle, p. 81.

[45] Ruf, p. 15.

[46] Ibid., p. 15.

[47] Egon Schwartz, Joseph von Eichendorff (New York: Twayne, 1972), p. 79.

[48] Ibid., p. 80.

[49] Ibid., p. 80.

[50] Werner Kohlschmidt, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, Bd. 3: Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von der Romantik bis zum späten Goethe (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1974), p. 504.

[51] Ibid., p. 505.

[52] Ibid., p. 506.

[53] Wolfgang Nehring, "Eichendorff und der Leser," Aurora 37 (1977), p. 54.

[54] Ibid., p. 54.

[55] Höllerer, p. 99.

CHAPTER THREE

JOHN KEATS

In Joseph von Eichendorff we have seen an example of a late Romantic poet content to remain formally and thematically within the bounds of his inherited tradition, imposing upon it the limitations of his ethical and religious values. Although derivative, his poetry is even in its earliest stages the work of an accomplished craftsman. It is, as we have observed, infused with tranquillity and remarkably free from conflict or struggle.

Unlike Eichendorff, Keats is a poet in constant development. Unwilling to take over the style and themes of Wordsworth, Coleridge, or other precursors, he is in search of his own poetic identity. His early writing is "the imperfect apprentice work--frequently occasional, often dashed off in the haste of momentary inspiration, and sometimes imitative--of a poet whose later greatness justifies the uneven experience of examining his earlier works."[1] His great poems shake themselves free, to a large extent, from the influence of Milton, Wordsworth, and other writers to achieve individuality of style and conception.[2] His eventual independence from the overbearing influence of the past makes him, as Harold Bloom observes, "perhaps the only genuine forerunner of the representative post-Romantic sensibility"[3] among the English Romantics. From youthful epigonism, Keats graduates to originality. Both his poems and his letters reveal a determination to exercise his own form of "creative correction" upon the poetic tradition of his time.

Sleep and Poetry (K, 51-61) from the Poems of 1817 already shows his intense concern with the function of poetry and the rôle of the poet. In it he seeks to assess his own development as well as that of English poetry. After a somewhat awkward picturesque preamble (l. 1-46), he plunges into a discussion of his poetic aspirations, ideals, and misgivings:

> O Poesy! for thee I hold my pen
> That am not yet a glorious denizen
> Of thy wide heaven--Should I rather kneel
> Upon some mountain-top until I feel
> A glowing splendour round about me hung,
> And echo back the voice of thine own tongue?
> O Poesy! for thee I grasp my pen
> That am not yet a glorious denizen
> Of thy wide heaven; yet, to my ardent prayer,
> Yield from thy sanctuary some clear air
> (l. 47-56)

In his enthusiasm, he wants to "die a death / Of luxury" (l. 57-8), as well as to seize "the events of this wide world. . ./ Like a strong giant" (l. 81-2). With his characteristic objectivity, however, Keats realizes that he presently exists in a state of sensuous intoxication with the beauty and novelty of poetic creation. He must move on, he says, to incorporate deeper matters in his work:

> And can I ever bid these joys farewell?
> Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,
> Where I may find the agonies, the strife
> Of human hearts:
> (l. 122-25)

As Douglas Bush comments, "these two stages have long been seen as Keatsian parallels to the second and third stages of development in Tintern Abbey, the adolescent and purely aesthetic passion for nature and, as mature compensation for the loss of that sensory intensity,

sympathy with man."[4] Wordsworth, however, speaks of his development in retrospect, while Keats is looking into the future; for Keats, moreover, poetic creation holds the exalted position which in Wordsworth's poem is held by nature:

> O for ten years, that I may overwhelm
> Myself in poesy; so I may do the deed
> That my own soul has to itself decreed.
> (l. 96-8)

A shift of emphasis is thus already evident, as the poet starts to focus on the poem itself and on the act of poetic creation, rather than attempting to reconcile the diverse elements of life into a harmonious whole.

The next long stanza (l. 122-54) is given over to the poet's visions of the sublime. The poetic ideal appears in the form of an Apollonian charioteer; this is followed by further "shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear" (l. 138). The poet at first feels uplifted by these visions; later, however, he is assailed by a sense of futility as the dichotomy between the ideal and the real is evident:

> A sense of real things comes doubly strong,
> And, like a muddy stream, would bear along
> My soul to nothingness:
> (l. 157-9)

He determines nevertheless to remain faithful to his ideal and to "strive / Against all doubtings" (l. 159-60). This is, in essence, the central task of the poet as defined in Sleep and Poetry: to incorporate the ideal in his poetry, although this "ideal" is not clearly defined.

Now that Keats has established the direction of his own development and defined the poet's obligation, he goes on to censure eighteenth

century poetry. "With the usual intolerance of young rebels, Keats goes beyond the relatively mild utterances of his romantic elders and launches (162-206) an attack on what Hunt and others called 'the French school' of Boileau and Pope."[5] In strong terms, Keats expresses his dissatisfaction with mechanical verse-making and adherance to rigid laws of composition. The "handicraftsmen" (l. 200) who posed as poets were guilty of indifference to true poetic inspiration (l. 184-5) and to the beauties of nature:

> The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd
> Its gathering waves--ye felt it not. The blue
> Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew
> Of summer nights collected still to make
> The morning precious: beauty was awake!
> Why were ye not awake?
> (l. 188-93)

From the Neo-Classicists, he moves on to his more immediate precursors:

> But let me think away those times of woe:
> Now 'tis a fairer season; ye have breathed
> Rich benedictions o'er us; ye have wreathed
> Fresh garlands: for sweet music has been heard
> In many places;--
> (l. 220-24)

He salutes three inspired poets: Chatterton (l. 218-19), Wordsworth (l. 224-26), and possibly Hunt (l. 226-29).[6] Although the nineteenth century has been marked by a reawakening of inspiration, Keats's praise of the Romantic generation is not undivided. Modern poetry is of uneven quality and often lacks subtlety:

> These things are doubtless: yet in truth we've had
> Strange thunders from the potency of song;
> Mingled indeed with what is sweet and strong,
> From majesty: but in clear truth the themes
> Are ugly clubs, the Poets Polyphemes
> Disturbing the grand sea.
> (l. 230-5)

Instead of writing only "what is sweet and strong," the new poets bombard the reader either with rhetorical dramatization ("strange thunders") or with didactic themes ("ugly clubs") and, carried away by a one-eyed idea of their own might, they come to resemble Polyphemes. As Bush observes, "Keats was doubtless reflecting Hunt--and Hazlitt--and anticipating his own later condemnation of Wordsworth's didacticism and excessive introspection, the 'egotistical sublime'."[7] Poetry must be as natural as "a drainless shower / Of light" (l. 235-6) and as unselfconscious of its own power as "might half-slumb'ring on its own right arm" (l. 237). This statement is later reflected in a letter to Reynolds: "Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself but its subject." (KL, I, 224)

Keats now proceeds to criticise the darkness of modern poetry:

> But strength alone though of the Muses born
> Is like a fallen angel: trees uptorn,
> Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres
> Delight it; for it feeds upon the burrs,
> And thorns of life; forgetting the great end
> Of poesy, that it should be a friend
> To sooth the cares, and lift the thoughts of man.
> (l. 241-47)

The attack here may be, according to Bloom, against the dark posturings of Byron's Childe Harold, the first two cantos of which had already appeared in 1812, or of Shelley's Alastor (1815).[8] Part of the attack may also be directed against the cult of Gothic horror: "Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres." Like Eichendorff, Keats criticizes the eventual directions taken by Romantic poets. His concluding statement in this passage, however, that poetry should be soothing and

uplifting, does not ring true, and allies itself with the Wordsworthian didacticism he has just condemned. This stance is modified when, in the remainder of the poem, Keats considers his own destiny as a poet. Once more, he views himself realistically but without sham modesty. Although he admits that he lacks the reason and wisdom of maturity, he yet has an intuitive grasp of the essence of poetry:

> What though I am not wealthy in the dower
> Of spanning wisdom; though I do not know
> The shiftings of the mighty winds that blow
> Hither and thither all the changing thoughts
> Of man: though no great minist'ring reason sorts
> Out the dark mysteries of human souls
> To clear conceiving: yet there ever rolls
> A vast idea before me, and I glean
> Therefrom my liberty; thence too I've seen
> The end and aim of Poesy.
> (l. 284-93)

Although this "vast idea" remains a somewhat vague concept, he nevertheless sees poetry as an end in itself, divorced from self-conscious reasoning or exterior purpose. Once more, however, his Dedalian flight of enthusiasm (l. 303) is checked by a realistic awareness of the difficulty of being a great poet:

> An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an isle,
> Spreads awfully before me. How much toil!
> How many days! what desperate turmoil!
> Ere I can have explored its widenesses.
> (l. 306-09)

A convincing interpretation of these lines is offered by A.P. Antippas:

> The ocean that Keats calls "dim" (that is, of unfavorable prospect and without bounds) and that spreads so awfully before his Icarian perspective is, I suggest, the intimidating expanse of the poetic tradition. The scattered islands are Keats's much travelled, imaginative realms of gold: they always evoke anguish, embarrassment, and "desperate turmoil", for each island is beneath the firm dominion of some poet already a successful vassal of Apollo.

> There seems to be no promontory left for the young suppliant to ascend even if he had the strength of wing.[9]

The poem ends somewhat limply with a profusion of picturesque lines which add little to the foregoing stanzas (l. 312-404). In spite of its unevenness, Sleep and Poetry is significant as an indication of Keats's attitude toward his Romantic precursors and toward himself as a poet. First of all, he rebels, like Wordsworth and other Romantics, against the artificiality and rigidity he sees in eighteenth century poetry, and advocates a return to feeling, nature, and inspiration. Second, he sees that Romanticism has marked a change toward greater creativity. His approval is not, however, without reservation. Although Romantic poetry possesses much that is "sweet and strong" (l. 232), it often lacks subtlety and is marred by excessive egotism, didacticism, and pessimistic elements.

Keats's conception of the poet's function in this poem does not differ greatly from that of earlier European Romantics. He reveals an intense awareness of the beauty and diversity of the universe, as well as a desire to identify and sympathize with humanity. At the same time, he does not regard himself as a prophet. He is not a Blake, a Wordsworth, or a Shelley, determined to impose his personal vision upon humanity. He sees himself primarily as a poet struggling to incorporate his vision of the sublime in his work. Poetry is an end in itself, and if it does indeed "sooth the cares, and lift the thoughts of man," this is accomplished by aesthetic means rather than by incorporating moral or didactic views.

In his letters, Keats defines his attitude toward his Romantic precursors more precisely, and his points of criticism are similar to those advanced in Sleep and Poetry. The well-known letter to George and Tom Keats of December, 1817 brings in his concept of Negative Capability:

> . . . at once struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in Literature and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously--I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason--Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge.
>
> (KL, I, 193-4)

In Sleep and Poetry, as we have seen, Keats has criticized the one-dimensional quality of contemporary writing which transforms poetic themes into "ugly clubs". This letter reiterates that the poet must be aware of the diversity of existence and must not seek to channel it into an artificial unity. As Bate paraphrases the passage,

> In our life of uncertainties, where no one system or formula can explain everything--where even a word is at best, in Bacon's phrase, a "wager of thought"--what is needed is an imaginative openness of mind and heightened receptivity to reality in its full and diverse concreteness. This, however, involves negating one's own ego.[10]

The "irritable reaching after fact and reason," of which Keats somewhat unjustly accuses Coleridge,[11] and the determination to force one's findings into a self-made system, are assertions of the ego. Instead of being caught up in a desire to develop his own interpretations, the poet should be content with "half knowledge."

> For a "great poet" especially, a sympathetic absorption in the essential significance of his object (caught and relished in that active cooperation of the mind in which the harmony of the human imagination and its object is attained) "overcomes every other consideration" (considerations that an "irritable reaching after fact and reason" might otherwise itch to pursue).[12]

The idea that the poet should possess this "Negative Capability" of living in uncertainties and of being content with "half knowledge" recurs in a letter written on February 3, 1818 to John Hamilton Reynolds. In this letter, Keats moves on to a more direct criticism of the Romantics as represented by Wordsworth. As in Sleep and Poetry, he attacks his precursor's desire to be a self-appointed philosopher or prophet:

> It may be said that we ought to read our Contemporaries. that Wordsworth &c should have their due from us. but for the sake of a few fine imaginative or domestic passages, are we to be bullied into a certain Philosophy engendered in the whims of an Egotist--Every man has his speculations, but every man does not brood and peacock over them till he makes a false coinage and deceives himself--Many a man can travel to the very bourne of Heaven, and yet want confidence to put down his half-seeing.
>
> (KL, I, 223)

The main points of his criticism are similar to those he has previously advanced: the "bullying" of the reader with didacticism, the egotism which causes the poet to think that his personal vision is the ultimate, the introspection or the tendency to "brood and peacock" which leads to deceptive conclusions, and the lack of "Negative Capability" to admit to "half-seeing". Keats summarizes his aversion to this poetic attitude by saying, "We hate poetry that has a palpable design on us" (KL, I, 224). He thus regards poetry as an end in itself, rather than as a vehicle of self-revelation and edification.

At the beginning of his great year of poetic creation (October 1818 to October 1819), Keats expands upon his view of "sympathetic absorption" in a letter to Richard Woodhouse. The poet has, he says, "no identity" (KL, I, 387), but is continually "filling some other Body--The Sun, the Moon, the Sea and Men and Women who are creatures of impulse are poetical and have about them an unchangeable attribute--the poet has none." (KL, I, 387) This "cameleon Poet" (KL, I, 387), who makes no moral judgments and who seeks to impose no self-evolved philosophy upon his reader, distinguishes himself sharply from the "wordsworthian or egotistical sublime" (KL, I, 387).

> As to the poetical Character itself, (I mean that sort of which, if I am any thing, I am a Member, that sort distinguished from the wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone) it is not itself--it has no self--it is everything and nothing--It has no character--it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated.
>
> (KL, I, 386-7)

The poetic self has thus been stripped of the importance it held in earlier Romantic writing. The poet combines awareness with passivity: although he constantly reaches out to gather experience, he does not seek to transform his perceptions or probe their implications.

This critical attitude toward Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Hunt was bound to have major effects upon Keats's poetry. Criticism has often pointed out the differences between Keats and other major English Romantic poets. David Perkins, in his Quest for Permanence, emphasizes the dramatic rather than didactic approach of Keats's poetry. Unlike the other Romantics, Keats is content to merely present or narrate.

"Keats often remains in the background. He establishes symbols, their latent significance is unfolded, and the poet seems to be largely passive to the implications of the symbol adopted."[13] Perkins concludes that Keats, unlike Wordsworth or Shelley, is concrete, not abstract, and oblique, not direct: "one does not find in him a clear-cut or obvious moral interpretation which can be pinned down in the language of abstraction."[14] Harold Bloom agrees with Perkins that Keats pursued the "naturalistic implications of the poet's relation to his own poem,"[15] and adds that he lacked the religious temperament of Blake, Wordsworth, and Shelley: "He felt the imagination's desire for a revelation that would redeem the inadequacies of our condition, but he felt also a humorous skepticism toward such desire."[16] The lack of moralizing in his poetry, says M.A. Goldberg, springs from his "negative capability": the ability to be content with doubts and uncertainties and to remain with the world of sensations. In Wordsworth's poetry, the self reacts with external phenomena to transcend the world of things into the truths they can teach man, while Keats uses the poetic act to penetrate into the essence of things. He moves "through and with them, and not above and beyond them."[17]

In the letter to Reynolds of February, 1818 in which Keats expresses his dislike for the poetry of "palpable design" (KL, I, 224), he goes on to say, "I don't mean to deny Wordsworth's grandeur and Hunt's merit--when we can have them uncontaminated and unobtrusive. Let us have the old poets, and robin Hood." (KL, I, 224-25) Enclosed in this letter

are Robin Hood and Lines on the Mermaid Tavern.

Robin Hood (K, 270-72) was, as Keats said, "written in the Spirit of Outlawry," (KL, I, 225) and in it, he sets out to debunk poetic conventions of his day. As the letter to Reynolds points out, the poem is in direct reaction to Wordsworthian didacticism. Instead of trying to lecture the reader, Keats entertains him with a lightly ironic treatment of themes of the exotic past and the mundane present. "Irony is on the negative side, it should be remembered, a way of affirming one's escape from traditional and conventional control, of showing the supremacy of mood over decorum."[18]

The desire to recapture an idyllic past was, of course, an important theme in English Romanticism. Wordsworth and to a smaller extent Coleridge both reached back into childhood years for the themes of their poetry, while the popularity of medieval and pseudo-medieval ballads and of the historical novel attest to the imaginative attraction of by-gone times. Robin Hood is a tongue-in-cheek treatment of a Romantic convention.

The form (seven-syllable couplets) is derived from the seventeenth century and, as Bate observes, its "rollicking meter" transforms into a light lyric the "dirgelike repetitions"[19] of phrases such as "No! those days are gone away / And their hours are old and gray." An irretrievable distance thus exists between past and present. The next seven lines consist of a mock-serious extended metaphor:

> And their minutes buried all
> Under the down-trodden pall
> Of the leaves of many years:
> Many times have winter's shears,

Frozen North, and chilling East
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces
(l. 3-9)

The minutes of "the old and gray hours" are thus like the leaves of many years, trodden into the ground to form a funeral pall. The leaves, in turn, are the fleece of the trees, shorn each winter by the shears of the tempests, which feast on their victims. The metaphor thus begins on a conventional note of nostalgia, as the poet speaks of the "pall / Of the leaves of many years." A surprise element is introduced with the realism of the words "shears" and "fleeces" and the exaggeration of the word "feast". The last line of the stanza administers the final realistic jolt by means of practicial details, when Keats states that these idyllic days occurred when "men knew nor rent nor leases."

Stanza two employs the same surprise technique as stanza one. The first four lines are again nostalgic, emphasizing that the past is fled:

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill;
(l. 11-14)

The next four lines are frivolous, depicting the surprise of "some wight" who is "given the half" by Echo, when he happens to hear the laughter of Robin Hood's outlaw gang in a supposedly deserted forest.

The vigorously down-to-earth tone mingled with nostalgia also affects the description of Robin Hood and his band. In stanza three, for instance, Keats begins with a melancholy evocation of the legendary

outlaws (l. 19-24). Once more, however, the mood shifts from conventional sadness to focus vividly on one of the clan members, who thrums a hunting ditty on an empty can, on the way to obtain a refill of ale (l. 25-32).

Stanza four begins in a renewed outburst of nostalgia:

> Gone, the merry morris din;
> Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
> Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
> Idling in the 'grenè shawe;'
> All are gone away and past!
> (l. 33-7)

Once more, the tone of regret is shattered by irony as remembrance of the past fades into awareness of the mercenary present. What would happen, asks Keats, if Robin were to be flung from his grave into present-day Britain? He would curse to see all his oak trees chopped down to build ships. Maid Marian "would weep that her wild bees / Sang not to her" (l. 46-7). The most outrageously anti-nostalgic statement occurs at the close of stanza four: "Strange! that honey / Can't be got without hard money!" (l. 47-8)

Although this poem is "written in the Spirit of Outlawry," part of its intent is serious. Stanza five places the past in perspective. The opening statement, "So it is," implies acceptance. The past is irretrievable. It can, however, provide the theme for romance and song. The poem concludes with a chorus of toasts to the Sherwood clan:

> Though their days have hurried by
> Let us two a burden try.
> (l. 62-3)

Robin Hood, in spite of its lightness of tone, is significant in the study of Keats as a late Romantic poet. Keats's lighter poems in

particular reveal what Louise Z. Smith has called a "balance of imaginative sensibility with detached objectivity."[20] Rather than repudiating romance, Keats complements Romantic sensibility with realistic detachment.

Viewed in the light of Romantic exoticism and Romantic irony, this poem leads to several conclusions. In no way does Robin Hood flounder in yearning after the past or in visions of a new millennium. Although Keats paints a lively picture of Robin Hood and his band, and although there is an implied criticism of the present age of shipbuilding and mercenary transactions (l. 38-48), the poem does not advocate a flight into the past or a rejection of the present, and expands upon no Rousseauesque idealization of the primitive state of man. It argues for a realistic acceptance of the passage of time. The past, however, is not entirely dead. Even in our present situation, the poem obliquely suggests, we can revive the past through song. As in the Ode to a Nightingale or in the Ode on a Grecian Urn, art confers immortality, and the past remains "for ever warm and still to be enjoyed" (K, 261, l.26).

The irony in Robin Hood consists in the blend of sensibility and detachment. Although Keats is sensitive to the beauty of the past, he turns critically upon his own desire for the exotic. By debunking the conventions of the age, he is also debunking his own fantasies. Repeatedly, as we have seen, nostalgia after the past is ruptured by playfulness and mock-sentimentality. The figures of by-gone days are

not glorified, but seen as ordinary human beings who fetch ale in cans, curse at the felling of trees, or gather honey. Past and present are thus relativized as poetic illusions are shattered. A new stage of synthesis is, however, suggested by the concluding stanza: the past, although seen in the light of the present, furnishes material for song.[21]

A great difference exists between Keats's Odes and his lighter poems. In the Odes, as Dickstein says, "he turns inward like Wordsworth and writes of the growth of a poet's mind."[22] The result is, however, not Wordsworthian and, by the same token, different from that of earlier Romanticism. The restoration of harmony through the imagination is a dominant theme of Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley. Keats, however, is objective. Dickstein maintains that "these poems explore motifs of escape and transcendence ultimately to overcome them; they are built on a concept of the imagination which is dialectical and tragic rather than escapist."[23] If, indeed, Keats finds any type of reconciliation of the polarities of pleasure and pain or beauty and decay in the Ode on Melancholy (K, 274-5), it lies in the matter-of-fact acceptance of death and decay, and in the pleasure derived from the momentary experience of beauty. Moreover, the poem suggests a transmutation of pain and pleasure which already has overtones of Decadence and Symbolism. As Mario Praz comments, "Keats is especially noteworthy, because in him are to be found the seeds of various elements which were to be developed later by the Pre-Raphaelites and which, through them, were to pass into French

Symbolism."[24]

The ode originally opened with a grisly stanza which Keats later cancelled, possibly because of its excessiveness.[25] Like the remainder of the poem, these cancelled lines describe pain and death in extreme terms. As in stanza one of the final version, the deleted stanza presents a warning against false melancholy, dressed in the trappings of Gothic horror.

> Though you should build a bark of dead men's bones,
> And rear a phantom gibbet for a mast,
> Stitch creeds together for a sail, with groans
> To fill it out, blood-stained and aghast;
> Although your rudder be a dragon's tail
> Long sever'd, yet still hard with agony,
> Your cordage large uprootings from the skull
> Of bald Medusa, certes you would fail
> To find the Melancholy--whether she
> Dreameth in any isle of Lethe dull.
> (K, 503)

Through the accumulation of macabre details, and the self-conscious exaggeration of images such as "stitch shrouds together for a sail, with groans / To fill it out," an ironic tone is, as Harold Bloom observes, established:

> This remarkable and grisly stanza is more than the reverse of an invitation to the voyage. Its irony is palpable; its humor is in the enormous labor of Gothicizing despair which is necessarily in vain, for the mythic beast, Melancholy, cannot thus be confronted.[26]

As in Sleep and Poetry, Keats is thus protesting against the convention which feeds on "darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres" (K, 57, l. 243). Melancholy is not to be found in the topoi of Gothic

horror: it must be experienced.

Stanza one carries this point farther by negating the traditional symbols of oblivion, melancholy, and death.

> No, no; go not to Lethe, neither twist
> Wolf's bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
> Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
> By nightshade, ruby grape of Prosperpine;
> Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
> Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
> Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
> A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
> For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
> And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.
> (l. 1-10)

Lethe, various herbs, the beetle, the death moth, and the owl--conventional images of melancholy derived from Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy[27] --are equally suspect, for they merely bring about the deadening of sensation, serving to "drown the wakeful anguish of the soul." Awareness is precious, and melancholy does not consist in conventional poses or in emotional indulgence. Rather than being something to cultivate through artificial means, melancholy comes naturally through experience:

> But when the melancholy fit shall fall
> Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud
> That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
> And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
> Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
> Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
> Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
> Or if they mistress some rich anger shows,
> Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
> And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.
> (l. 11-20)

As Bate comments, this stanza emphasizes "the vivid acceptance of process." Melancholy comes unprovoked and is, indeed, a part of all

experience. Life and death are concomitant, and the "same process in which death is implicit is also leading things into existence and fostering them toward fulfillment."[28] Transience is inevitable. Keats focuses on the irony of life: fertility is itself a shroud (1.14), for the rain that feeds the growth of April also leads to death. This reality must be seized and experienced, along with its inherent melancholy. The contemplation of beauty is also a melancholic contemplation of death (l. 15-17). Instead of seeking to transcend destructive forces by reaching after a higher state of harmony, Keats sees a sensual pleasure in the juxtaposition of sorrow and beauty: "then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose." Even the quarrel of lovers has its beauties, for it allows the lover to feed on the "peerless eyes" of his mistress (l. 19-20).

The concluding stanza reiterates that melancholy is inseparable from beauty and joy:

> She dwells with Beauty--Beauty that must die;
> And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
> Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
> Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
> Ay, in the very temple of Delight
> Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
> Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
> Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
> His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
> And be among her cloudy trophies hung.
> (l. 21-30)

Keats explores the thin line of demarcation between pleasure and pain, delight and melancholy in much the same way as will be done by Poe, Baudelaire, the Symbolists and the Decadents: "Je ne prétends pas que

la Joie ne puisse pas s'associer avec la Beauté, mais je dis que la Joie [en] est un des ornements les plus vulgaires; --tandis que la mélancolie en est pour ainsi dire l'illustre compagne, à ce point que je ne conçois guère. . . un type de Beauté où il n'y ait du Malheur."[29]

The final four lines of the ode present a strikingly sensual image: melancholy can only be experienced by that person who, with a "strenuous tongue / can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine." In other words, to taste joy, one must taste melancholy, and in a sense, one is as voluptuous a pleasure as the other.

Seen in the context of English Romanticism, Keats accomplishes much in this poem. Although he employs standard Romantic themes such as dejection and the passage of time, he does not try to transcend reality and, as Perkins comments, "his poetry does not display the lingering nostalgia which one finds so pervasive in Wordsworth, the sense of glory slipping into the past as the poet strives to hold, regain, or replace it with something else."[30] No clear-cut moral conclusion emerges, and the poet speaks more through symbols than through a poetic "I". This alone distinguishes him from other Romantics: to take three examples, Coleridge's Dejection Ode, Wordsworth's Elegaic Stanzas on Peele Castle, and Shelley's Ode to the West Wind are all centred around the poetic narrator. Keats, on the contrary, writes about the universal and not the personal. The type of sensibility, moreover, has gone beyond Romanticism, and already possesses many

elements of the Pre-Raphaelite, Decadent, and Symbolist movements.

The ode To Autumn (K, 273-4) has been characterized as one of the most perfect poems in the English language.[31] Its perfection, as Bate comments, is achieved by the unity and decorum of its parts.[32] The poem attains a classical balance and harmony and is, moreover, almost Parnassian in its impassibility. There is no discursive language, no suggestion of an "I". In this sense, it differs greatly from many other Romantic nature poems. For instance, nature in Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey or Coleridge's This Lime Tree Bower my Prison provides a backdrop for and a reflection of the drama which is taking place within the poetic narrator. Here no "out-in-out"[33] movement takes place, for the poet does not allow self-searching to distract his eye from the processes of autumn. To Autumn is, as Bate says, "entirely concrete, and self-sufficient in and through its concreteness."[34]

The description of autumn is an expression in concrete terms of a climax in fruitfulness. The first stanza is pervaded with images of tension and even strain: the season conspires with the sun to "load and bless" (l. 3) the vines with fruit, to "bend" (l. 5) the trees with apples, to "fill all fruit with ripeness" (l. 6), "to swell the gourd" (l. 7), and "plump the hazel shells" (l. 7). The intensity of this growth gives an illusion of immortality as autumn conspires

> to set budding more,
> And still more, later flowers for the bees,
> Until they think warm days will never cease,

For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy shells.
(l. 8-11)

The poem continues to hang on the brink of apparent timelessness. Motion is largely arrested in the second stanza:

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.
(l. 12-22)

These lines make clearer the suggestion that the present stage of autumn is near death by the meantion of poppies and of the "hook", which put a stop to growth. In this time of arrested motion, we see "the last oozings hours by hours" of time as well as of the cider-press.

The underlying note of sadness is more evident in the third stanza, which begins with a wistful question: "Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?" (l. 23). The day now becomes "soft-dying" (l. 25); the choir of the gnats is "wailful" as they "mourn", rising or sinking "as the light wind lives or dies" (l. 27-29); lambs ready for slaughter bleat from the hills (l. 30), and birds are gathering to leave (l. 32-33). Most striking in this stanza is the calm acceptance of death as part of an inevitable process. Although life and death are seen as one great whole or cycle, the unity presented is in no way transcendent. The poet is content to remain in the actualities of life around him, and his

attitude toward death is passive.[35] As in the Ode on Melancholy, there is no Wordsworthian "lingering nostalgia"[36] or Shelleyan "hostility and longing to escape."[37] The serenity and balance of this poem result from an aesthetic contemplation of autumn which, at the same time, suggests the ongoing cycle of life and death.

The combination of sensibility and detachment characteristic of Keats's mature poetry is also reflected in the form of To Autumn. It leads him, as Bate observes in his study of Keats's stylistic development, to

> create a stanza majestic and staid in its restraint; to draw almost instinctively upon a monosyllabic and consonantal diction, native in origin, and rich in sensuous connotation; to employ intricate patterns of vowel interplay; to preserve with cautious skill the integrity of the line and yet weight it liberally with spondaic feet; to adapt whatever means, phonetic, pictorial, or connotative, which would "load every rift with ore" and allow each line to "set soberly, although in magnificence."[38]

From the analysis of these four poems by Keats, of which Sleep and Poetry represents the beginning of his career, Robin Hood, his approach to maturity, and the Ode on Melancholy and the Ode to Autumn, the height of his achievement, a progressive mastery of style is evident. "Until after the composition of Isabella, he did not often rise above eclectic imitation, laxity, and occasionally fitful and perhaps misguided attempts to attain discipline and restraint."[39] Although his conception of poetry underwent constant change, it was, as Bate comments, "almost always directed to the specific and the concrete."[40] For this reason, Keats's work distinguishes itself by an accumulation of concrete detail rare in the poetry of other English Romantics. In his study of Keats as the model

for later imitators, Armin Geraths observes that the richness of Keats's imagery lent itself to consequent imitation. In contrast with the abstract imagery of Byron or Shelley, Keats concentrates on individual things:

> Bei Keats schrumpft die kosmische Dimension, die Ziel des Einfühlungsstrebens der Poesie Byrons und Shelleys ist. Keats nimmt eine Individualisierung, ja in gewissem Sinne eine 'Privatisierung' der empathy vor. . . Statt oceans, skies, mountains, landscape richtet Keats in seiner Dichtung den Blick auf sparrows and people etc. . . Er rückt das Ich wieder an die Dingwelt heran und konzentriert das Einfühlungsstreben auf die ekstatische Beseelung der realen, vertrauten Objekte.[41]

As Bate points out in The Stylistic Development of Keats, Keats was intensely aware of the relationship between form and content. More than any other English Romantic, he combines "intensity and restraint"[42] in his mature poetry and particularly in his odes. In Sleep and Poetry, he had written that poetry is "Might half-slumb'ring on its own right arm." (1. 237)

> It was this highly dynamic power, caught momentarily in repose, and constrained and imprisoned still further in the bonds of art, which Keats now sought above all else to attain. For however impassioned may be the intensity of epithet and image in the odes, and however rich and heavy the music with which they are fraught, the form of the odes is one of strict sobriety and of a classical restraint.[43]

Keats thus overcomes "the anxiety of influence" in a variety of ways. From the eclecticism and derivativeness of his early poetry, he arrives at the distincitive blend of sensibility and detachment of the mature poems. Most important of all, he departs from the "egotistical sublime" of his Romantic precursors and contemporaries and incorporates in his

poetry "a sympathetic absorption in the essential significance of his object."[44]

NOTES

[1] W.H. Evert, Aesthetic and Myth in the Poetry of Keats (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), p. 88.

[2] See Harold Bloom, "Keats and the Embarrassments of Poetic Tradition," From Sensibility to Romanticism, ed. F.W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 513-15.

[3] Ibid., p. 521.

[4] Douglas Bush, John Keats: His Life and Writings (New York: Macmillan, 1966), pp. 37-8.

[5] Ibid., p. 38.

[6] See Bush, p. 39.

[7] Ibid., p. 39.

[8] See Harold Bloom, The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1971), p. 367.

[9] A.P. Antippas, "Keats's Individual Talent and Tradition," Tulane Studies in English, 20 (1972), 90.

[10] W.J. Bate, John Keats (Cambridge: Belknap, 1963), p. 249.

[11] See Bate, p. 249.

[12] Ibid., p. 250.

[13] David Perkins, The Quest for Permanence (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1959), p. 196.

[14] Ibid., p. 196.

[15] Bloom, "Keats and the Embarrassments of Poetic Tradition," p. 525.

[16] Ibid., p. 521.

[17] M.A. Goldberg, The Poetics of Romanticism (Yellow Springs: Antioch Press, 1969), p. 133.

[18] Irving Babbitt, "Romantic Irony," Rousseau and Romanticism (New York: World, 1966), p. 207.

[19] Rate, p. 297.

[20] Louise Z. Smith, "The Material Sublime: Keats and Isabella," Studies in Romanticism, 13(1974), p. 30.

[21] On Keats and Romantic Irony, see Stuart M. Sperry, Keats the Poet (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 242-91, and, by the same author, "Toward a Definition of Romantic Irony," Romantic and Modern: Revaluations of Literary Tradition (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), pp. 3-28.

[22] Morris Dickstein, Keats and his Poetry (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1971), p. 189.

[23] Ibid., p. 190.

[24] Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, trans. by Angus Davidson, Second ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 211.

[25] See Bate, p. 522.

[26] Harold Bloom, The Visionary Company, p. 413.

[27] See Bate, p. 522.

[28] Ibid., p. 522.

[29] Charles Baudelaire, Mon coeur mis à nu, in Journaux intimes, ed. J. Crépet et G. Blin (Paris: Corti, 1949), p. 22.

[30] Perkins, p. 197.

[31] See Bate, p. 581.

[32] Ibid., p. 581.

[33] See Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric," From Sensibility to Romanticism, ed. F.W. Hilles and H. Bloom (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. 528.

[34] Bate, p. 581.

[35] Perkins, p. 199.

[36] Ibid., p. 197.

[37] Ibid., p. 197.

[38] W.J. Bate, The Stylistic Development of Keats (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1945), p. 185.

[39] Ibid., p. 7.

[40] Ibid., p. 1.

[41] See Armin Geraths, Epigonale Romantik: Untersuchungen zu Keats, Rosetti, Mrs. Browing und Rupert Brooke (Frankfurt/M.: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1975), p. 28.

[42] Geraths, p. 29.

[43] Bate, The Stylistic Development of Keats, p. 140.

[44] Bate, John Keats, p. 250.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOPHILE GAUTIER

When Théophile Gautier began his poetic career in 1826, Romanticism in France was in its hey-day, and he was never to lose his enthusiasm for the movement. In his Histoire du Romantisme, left unfinished upon his death in 1872, he writes in glowing terms:

> Nous avons eu l'honneur d'être enrôlé dans ces jeunes bandes qui combattaient pour l'idéal, la poésie et la liberté de l'art, avec un enthousiasme, une bravoure et un dévouement qu'on ne connaît plus aujourd'hui. Le chef rayonnant reste toujours debout sur sa gloire comme une statue sur une colonne d'airain, mais le souvenir des soldats obscurs va bientôt se perdre, et c'est un devoir pour ceux qui ont fait part de la grande armée littéraire d'en raconter les exploits oubliés.
>
> (HR, p. 1-2)

This "chef rayonnant" was of course Victor Hugo, to whom he was introduced by his friends Pétrus Borel and Gérard de Nerval. As a member of Hugo's cénacle, he took part in the famous battle of Hernani, read and discussed the works which were the rage in literary circles,[1] and above all, underwent the influence of Hugo and other prominent contemporaries.[2]

Like Eichendorff and Keats, Gautier was thus an inheritor and not an originator of Romanticism; and like them, he was acutely aware of his precursors and contemporaries. As an examination of his poem Compensation from Poésies diverses (1838) and of L'Histoire du romantisme (1872) will show, his poetic theory and his concept of the rôle of the

poet have some Romantic elements. At the same time, in spite of his praise of the Romantic generation, his aesthetic doctrine reveals, well before the publication of Emaux et camées (1852), a movement beyond Romanticism.

Compensation, it is interesting to note, was published in 1838, at a time when Gautier's preface to Albertus (October, 1832) and to Mademoiselle de Maupin (May, 1834) had already appeared. In both of these prose works, he argues for the autonomy of art. Concerning the Préface to Albertus, Jasinski notes some resemblance to Hugo's prefaces to the Orientales and Feuilles d'automne, but adds that Gautier's work "établit, dans toute sa pureté, sur un fond de pessimisme, la doctrine de l'art pour l'art" (G, I, xxix). This preface explicitly states that art is self-sufficient, and that beauty is an end in itself:

> A quoi cela sert-il?--Cela sert à être beau.--N'est-ce pas assez? comme les fleurs, comme les parfums, comme les oiseaux, comme tout ce que l'homme n'a pu détourner et dépraver à son usage. . . La peinture, la sculpture, la musique ne servent absolument à rien.
>
> (G, I, p. 82)

Less than two years later, in the Préface to Mademoiselle de Maupin, he once more takes up the problem of the "social purpose" of art. He ironically mimics the critics who insist that the poet should attempt to save society:

> La société souffre, elle est en proie à un grand déchirement intérieur. . . C'est au poète à chercher la cause de ce malaise et à le guérir. Le moyen, il le trouvera en sympathisant de coeur et d'âme avec l'humanité (des poètes philanthropes! ce serait quelque chose de rare et de charmant). Ce poète, nous l'attendons, nous l'appelons de tous nos voeux. Quand il paraîtra, à lui les acclamations de la foule, à lui les palmes, à lui les couronnes, à lui le Prytanée. . .
>
> (M de M, p. 20)

To this he replies:

> Rien de ce qui est beau n'est indispensable à la vie.--
> On supprimerait les fleurs, le monde n'en souffrirait pas
> matériellement; qui voudrait cependant qu'il n'y eût plus
> de fleurs? Je renoncerais plutôt aux pommes de terre
> qu'aux roses.
>
> (M de M, p. 23)

A strong affinity between Keats and Gautier is thus evident, as both writers reject at an early stage the prophetic and didactic rôle of the poet. Gautier's protest is also, to some extent, against the "egotistical sublime," which leads a poet to think that his personal vision is indispensable to the future of humanity.

These two prefaces provide an essential background to Compensation (G, II, 191-2), which combines Romantic and non-Romantic elements in its view of the poet. As Jasinski remarks in his note to the poem, "l'idée s'indiquait dans les Consolations de Sainte Beuve (XVII, "A mon ami Leroux")" (G, I, lxii). At the same time, the poem has affinities with the Huitième Vision of Lamartine's Chute d'un ange, which dates from the same year. Compensation, however, distinguishes itself in that it already goes beyond the Romantic tradition.

Poets, Gautier begins by saying, are supermen favoured by God:

> Il naît sous le soleil de nobles créatures
> Unissant ici-bas tout ce qu'on peut rêver
> Corps de fer, coeur de flamme, admirables natures.
>
> Dieu semble les produire afin de se prouver;
> Il prend, pour les pétrir, une argile plus douce,
> Et souvent passe un siècle à les parachever.
>
> (l. 1-6)

From even the most fleeting fantasies, the poetic imagination creates

immortal works. Referring to poets, Gautier says:

> Leur moindre fantaisie est une oeuvre éternelle,
> Tout cède devant eux; les sables inconstants
> Gardent leurs pas empreints, comme un airain fidèle.
> (l. 13-15)

Dreams, ideals, and desires, which ordinary people can merely sketch clumsily, are rendered in full perfection in the works of the masters, who combine dreams with reality in their strange existence:

> Leur existence étrange est le réal du rêve;
> Ils exécuteront votre plan idéal,
> Comme un maître savant le croquis d'un élève.
>
> Vos désirs inconnus, sous l'arceau triomphal
> Dont votre esprit en songe arrondissait la voûte,
> Passent assis en croupe au dos de leur cheval.
> (l. 19-24)

The implied contempt for ordinary humanity is made clearer in the next stanza: poets proceed with sure steps along the road where others, assailed by uncertainties, remain seated at the wayside (l. 25-7). In the tenth stanza, Gautier reiterates that the true creators, "types toujours vivants dont on fait des récits" (l. 30), occur rarely, even in the most fruitful centuries.

The final seven lines contain Gautier's major departure from traditional Romantic theory as represented by F. Schlegel, Wordsworth, Lamartine and Hugo by revealing an extreme contempt for nature. The poet, although a divine product of nature, goes against the grain of ordinary creation:

> Nature avare, ô toi, si féconde en vipères,
> En serpents, en crapauds tout gonflés de venins,
> Si prompte à repeupler tes immondes repaires,

> Pour tant d'animaux vils, d'idiots et de nains,
> Pour tant d'avortements et d'oeuvres imparfaites,
> Tant de monstres impurs échappés de tes mains,
>
> Nature, tu nous dois encor bien des poètes!
> (l. 31-37)

Gautier's hostility toward nature goes beyond that of Vigny in La Maison du berger (1844) and allies itself with that of Huysmans and other Decadent writers.[3] The poet is basically an enemy of nature, which is remarkable for its greed, vileness, and proliferation of monsters. Instead of singing of what is finest and purest in nature, he provides an escape from the meanness of actuality in his work.

> For Gautier, the purpose of art is clear: "élever l'homme." The corollary is that art is a refuge and a compensation for life, "ce qui console le mieux de vivre" ("Préface," Albertus). An element of revolt is therefore implicit: the poet-artist not only rejects the mediocrity of existence (his verse is often elegaic, recording as it does the gap between dream and reality) but the very condition of mortality.[4]

The idea that art goes against the baseness of ordinary life had already been strongly expressed in Gautier's "Préface" (May, 1834) to Mademoiselle de Maupin (1835):

> Il n'y a de vraiment beau que ce qui ne peut servir à rien; tout ce qui est utile est laid, car c'est l'expression de quelque besoin, et ceux de l'homme sont ignobles et dégoûtants, comme sa pauvre et infirme nature.
> (M de M, p. 23)

Gautier therefore looks for harmony in art and not in nature.

As in Keats's letters and in Sleep and Poetry, the poet has ceased to be a prophet. He is no longer, like in Eichendorff's An die Dichter, an inspired teacher leading humanity to higher and better things.

Significantly, the impassible poet does not concern himself with the people he surpasses:

> Ces hommes-là s'en vont, calmes et radieux,
> Sans quitter un instant leur pose solennelle,
> Avec l'oeil immobile et le maintien des dieux.
> (l. 10-12)

A gap thus exists between Lamartine, who states in La Chute d'un ange, "écoutez-les prier, car ils sont vos prophètes"[5] and Gautier, whose poets write without an audience. As he was to express himself later, "Ils s'exercent dans le silence, l'ombre et la solitude, comme ces pianistes qui la nuit travaillent à se délier les doigts sur des claviers muets pour ne pas importuner leurs voisins." (HR, p. 358)

L'Histoire du Romantisme recounts with a balance of enthusiasm and objectivity the development and gradual dissolution of the Romantic School in France. Although Gautier's treatment is sympathetic, conclusions may nevertheless be drawn from the work regarding his own position in the movement and his reasons for eventually turning away from it. Like Keats in Sleep and Poetry, he criticizes the poverty of eighteenth century literature:

> On ne saurait pas imaginer à quel degré d'insignifiance et de pâleur en était arrivée la littérature. . . Les classiques trouvaient cela parfaitement beau; mais devant ces chefs d'oeuvre, leur admiration ne pouvait s'empêcher de mettre la main devant la bouche pour masquer un bâillement.
> (HR, 2)

On the other hand, excitement and dynamism characterized the new movement:

> Les générations actuelles doivent se figurer difficilement l'effervescence des esprits à cette époque; il s'opérait un mouvement pareil à celui de la Renaissance. Une sève de vie nouvelle circulait impétueusement. Tout

> germait, tout bourgeonnait, tout éclatait à fois. Des parfums vertigineux se dégageaient des fleurs; l'air grisait, on était fou de lyrisme et d'art. Il semblait qu'on vînt de retrouver le grand secret perdu, et cela était vrai, on avait retrouvé la poésie.
>
> (HR, 2)

Once the new literary movement was established, however, came its aftermath of epigonal imitation. Realistically, Gautier states that "dans l'art comme dans la réalité, on est toujours fils de quelqu'un, même quand le père est renié par l'enfant" (HR, 299). This persistent literary influence is in fact beneficial, for it leads to further development: "l'originalité n'est que la note personnelle ajoutée au fonds commun préparé par les contemporains ou les prédécesseurs immédiats" (HR, 299). The danger lies, however, in mere imitation:

> Après le grand épanouissement poétique, qui ni peut se comparer qu'à la floraison de la Renaissance, il y eut un regain abondant. Tout jeune homme fit son volume de vers empreint de l'imitation du maître préféré, et quelquefois mêlant plusieurs imitations ensemble.
>
> (HR, 300)

Gautier thus realizes with critical acuity that late Romanticism tended to lapse into epigonism. His description of "tout jeune homme" with his volume of imitative verse is actually a description of himself upon the publication of Poésies in 1830. In L'Histoire du romantisme, he dismisses his early collections of poetry preceeding Emaux et camées lightly, saying that they "rentrent dans le cycle carlovingien du romantisme. . . nous n'avons pas à nous en occuper" (HR, 321-2). Emaux et camées is his attempt to add "la note personnelle" to the work of his precursors and contemporaries. Restraint and precision become, at least in theory,

the key-notes of his work:

> Ce titre, Emaux et camées, exprime le dessein de traiter sous forme restreinte de petits sujets, tantôt sur plaque d'or ou de cuivre avec les vives couleurs de l'émail, tantôt avec la roue du graveur de pierres fines, sur l'agate, la cornaline ou l'onyx.
>
> (HR, 322)

Without entirely reacting against Romanticism, Gautier thus evolves from youthful epigonism[6] to l'art pour l'art and le mouvement parnassien. The "anxiety of influence" is resolved by borrowing, rejecting, and creative correction.

The poems we shall examine from Gautier's so-called Romantic period are full of borrowed Romanticism. Stock postures enter into his early writing: "sentimental and naive in Poésies, truculently Byronic in Albertus, luridly tortured in La Comédie de la mort."[7] As René Jasinski points out, Gautier experienced difficulty in finding subjects for poems: "artiste patient au souffle un peu court, il aimera se raccrocher et prendre appui."[8] Moreover, his memory, like that of Coleridge, may have been such that he often unwittingly used lines and phrases from other writers. These borrowings and influences are pointed out at length in Jasinski's Années romantiques de Gautier and in his edition of the Poésies complètes.

Critical judgment of the Poésies (1830) has often been unnecessarily severe. Richard Grant, for instance, comments in his recent book on Gautier that

> it is impossible to be sure whether Gautier believed everything he wrote. The poetry sounds insincere, but bad poetry always sounds insincere, and it is in fact likely that these poems present a mixture of the clichés of the day and the

> genuine pessimism of a young man seeking in vain some ideal world. The most significant aspect of these early poems is that they are written in a wide variety of verse forms.[9]

Along with the "clichés of the day" are elements of originality which lead the poet beyond his youthful epigonism. Raymond Giraud offers a more incisive evaluation:

> Although some of his first poems were personal and even sentimental, they were distinguished already by a painterly or malerisch quality; they are rich in the sensations produced not by sentiment but by words. . . His poetry is self-conscious, that is, conscious of being poetry, of being an art, self-enclosed, an end in itself, a created microcosm.[10]

Pensées d'automne (G, I, 38-9), from the Poésies of 1830 reveals this mixture of imitation and innovation. The poet's approach to nature is detached, and the poem distinguishes itself chiefly by an occasional aptness of description.

> L'automne va finir; au milieu du ciel terne
> Dans un cercle blafard et livide qui cerne
> Un nuage plombé, le soleil dort: du fond
> Des étangs remplis d'eau monte un brouillard qui fond
> Collines, champs, hameaux dans une même teinte.
> Sur les carreaux la pluie en large gouttes tinte;
> La froide bise siffle; un sourd frémissement
> Sort du sein des forêts; les oiseaux tristement
> Mêlant leurs cris plaintifs aux cris des bêtes fauves,
> Sautent de branche en branche à travers les bois chauves,
> Et semblent aux beaux jours envolés dire adieu.
> (l. 1-11)

Shapes and colours predominate: the sky is "terne", the sun is framed "dans un cercle blafard et livide;" hills, fields, and villages are covered by a uniform "teinte" of fog, and the birds jump from branch to branch, "à travers les bois chauves." In keeping with the sombre scene,

the rhythm is slow and measured.

The poet tends to organise reality, resulting in a loss of spontaneity of description. Tennant comments that "a static or cinematographic effect is often conveyed by Gautier through his painter's habit of eyeing landscape in terms of organised planes of observation."[11] Words such as "au milieu" (1.1), "dans un cercle" (1.2), "du fond" (1.3), "sur" (1.6), "à travers" (1.10), "près de" (1.16), and "là" (1.17) impart a contrived neatness to the description.

After the purely picturesque opening, the poet makes an attempt in the last ten lines to convert the poem into a Hugolian meditation:

> . . . et moi, dans les vallées,
> Quand je vois le gazon sous les blanches gelées
> Disparaître et mourir, je reviens à pas lents
> M'asseoir le coeur navré près des tisons brûlants
> (l. 13-16)

A journey backwards in time follows as the poet contrasts the colourfulness of early fall with its present greyness. The September sun once "donnait à la grappe un jaune reflet d'ambre" (1.18); apples hung heavy on the branch, and the path was veiled by the "trèfle fleuri, pittoresque rideau" (1.20). The poem ends in a flash of colour, a technique similar to that later to be used by Heredia in Les Trophées (1893):

> Et surtout des bleuets et des coquelicots,
> Points de pourpre et d'azur dans l'or des blés égaux.
> (l. 23-24)

In spite of the effectiveness of the contrast drawn between the present dreariness of fall and the colourfulness of the poet's memories, Gautier does not remove the impression that the intrusion of the "I" is

artificial, and that the poem could stand better as a purely descriptive piece. He is following a Romantic convention with no great success, for the type of interaction which exists between man and nature in Lamartine's Lac (1820) or Hugo's Matin (1822) is absent. The poet is a passive onlooker. Moreover, Cautier makes no effort to reconcile the antitheses of sterility and fruitfulness into a larger unity. In this respect, Pensées de l'automne is farther removed from traditional Romantic nature poetry than Eichendorff's Nachts (1853), where the natural scene leads to God as the final unity, or Keats's Ode to Autumn (1819), which suggests that life and death, as symbolized by autumn, are inseparable parts of an ongoing process. Even more than Keats, Gautier remains with the objects set before him. Nevertheless, this poem must not be regarded too negatively and exclusively as a piece of failed Romanticism. By the very fact that the poet develops none of the grandiose themes of Romanticism and concentrates on the aesthetic appeal of the description of the natural scene, he is already taking a step toward l'art pour l'art, with its ideal of the autonomous, self-sufficient art work.

Gautier's Moyen âge (G, I, 4) in his Poésies of 1830 treats a theme which enjoyed great popularity in France, especially from 1820 to 1830. In this poem, Jasinski notes echoes of Hugo's Aux ruines de Montfort-l'Amaury (1825) but comments that "l'évocation, alors banale, s'avive d'une fine couleur" (G. I, XVIII). This "fine couleur" constitutes the chief success of the poem. Although the poet self-consciously

tries to adopt a personal tone, the strength lies far more in the minuteness of description than in the depth of his reactions.

The poem begins somewhat maladroitly with a cheville: "Quand je me vais poursuivant mes courses poétiques" (1.1). The poet now describes what he sees: "Je m'arrête surtout aux vieux châteaux gothiques" (1.2). The bent of this poem is indeed painterly as Gautier focuses on shapes, colours, and details: the "toits d'ardoise aux reflets bleus et gris" (1.3), "leurs murs verdis" (1.11), "leurs cours où l'herbe croît à travers les pavés" (1.12), "leurs girouettes frêles / Que la blanche cigogne effleure de ses ailes" (1. 13-14). Through the repetition of "leurs" in parallel structures, the poet neatly sets out the various aspects of the scene. Shapes and geometrical forms are emphasized: "faîtes couronnées d'arbustes rabougris" (1.4), "leurs pignons anguleux, leurs tourelles aiguës" (1.5), "légendes . . . en fantasques dessins" (1.8), "minarets moresques" (1.9), "leurs portails blasonnés / De monstres, de griffons, bizarrement ornés" (1. 15-16). Through the frequency of prepositions and adverbs of place, objects are situated in relation to one another: c.f. "où" (1.7, 12, 19, 20), "à travers" (1.12), "au sommet de" (1.13).

The same neatness which characterizes the description also characterizes the structure of the poem. The first three lines make mention of the poetic narrator who observes the scene ("je vais. . . je m'arrête. . . j'aime); similarly, the last three lines round off the poem on a personal note:

> . . . recueilli dans moi, je m'égare, rêvant,
> Paré de souvenirs d'amour et de féerie,

Le brillant moyen âge et la chevalerie.
(l. 20-22)

At the mid-point of the poem, the first person is once again introduced: "J'aime leurs murs verdis par l'eau du ciel lavés" (l.11). As in many poems by Eichendorff, self-conscious symmetry prevails, in contrast with the formlessness of many other Romantic poems.

A comparison of Moyen âge with Hugo's Aux ruines de Montfort-l'Amaury[13] reveals the simultaneous epigonism and originality of the young Gautier. Both poets express their love of ruins: "je vous aime, ô débris!" (l. 1) and mention the wind moaning: "Et le vent. . . / Gémit dans les hauts peupliers!" (l. 41-42). Hugo, like Gautier, observes shapes and colours, although with less precision than in Moyen âge:

Je contemple longtemps vos créneaux meurtriers,
Et la tour octogone et ses briques rougies
(l. 9-10)

Hugo, however, situates the medieval scene in a larger perspective: the time is autumn, a city is nearby, and the ruins are surrounded by a forest. A journey backwards in time results from the observation of the ruins:

Je médite longtemps, en mon coeur replié;
Et la ville, à mes pieds, d'arbres enveloppée,
Etend ses bras en croix et s'allonge en épée,
Comme le fer d'un preux dans la plaine oublié.
(l. 21-24)

The "moi" of the poet is also in the foreground: the scene, he says, attaches him "comme un lierre aux pierres inégales" (l. 32). His emotional response is emphasized by frequent exclamations and antitheses, notably absent in Gautier's poem.

The success of Aux ruines de Montfort-l'Amaury is thus achieved through the evocation of a mood, while that of Moyen âge, through its precise description. Where Hugo succeeds, Gautier fails. He remains rooted in the objects before him, and attempts to evoke a mood are feeble, as in the use of indirect comparison in "Leurs corridors. . . où comme une voix faible erre et gémit le vent" (l. 19). The poet is essentially an artist looking at a landscape as if it were a painting. As Rita Benesch points out, "Chaque 'vue' devient 'tableau', le monde réel se trouve transposé dans la sphère de l'art par l'optique particulière et la vision picturale du spectateur."[14]

What evolves from this poem is a superficial attitude toward the past saved only by some lines of effective description. In no way does the poet make the past an object of Sehnsucht, or take up heroic themes and relate them to the present. When he says,

> . . . m'égare, rêvant
> Paré de souvenirs d'amour et de féerie,
> Le brillant moyen âge et de la chevalerie

he is not entirely convincing. He is a late Romantic striking a pose.

Gautier's view of the past, and in particular, of medieval art, is not fully represented by his poem Moyen âge, a somewhat amateurish exercise in description. A greater depth of approach enters into Melancholia (G, II, 83-90), a poem which first appeared in 1834, some four years after Moyen âge. This poem blends two of the themes which form the basis of this study: exoticism and melancholy. René Jasinski comments on the Romantic roots of Gautier's treatment of both these

themes:

> Or, le romantisme remettait en honneur la peinture allemande. . . et l'on sait quelle sera la fortune du "soleil noir" de la mélancolie (v. 168) avec G. de Nerval. La ruine de l'idéalisme religieux et le vieillissement de l'humanité font écho à Rolla, et la mélancolie "petite maîtresse" rejoint les personnifications de fantaisie alors répandues. . .
> (G, I, XLVIII)

The enthusiasm for Germany as a land of exotic art, legends and scenes was, as Pierre Jourda points out[15] widespread among French Romantics. In his choice of a topic, Gautier is thus following in the footsteps of Mme. de Staël, Hugo, Musset, Sand, and Nerval. To the French as well as the German Romantics, Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) was, in spite of his historical position as a renaissance man, the Gothic artist par excellence, and his famous work Melancholia provides the topic for Gautier's poem.

Gautier begins by proclaiming his love of old German art works whose figures combine virginal purity with mysticism: "Tout ce peuple mystique au front grave, à l'oeil calme" (G, II, 83). Although German art lacks the technical finesse of works by painters such as Veronèse or Sanzio, it nevertheless surpasses the work of the Italian masters in its simplicity and purity. The works of Albrecht Dürer represent a world of pure, living faith now lost. Christianity has been rent asunder by conflicting factions, and flesh and spirit, earth and heaven are now irreconcilable to Christians. Dürer, however, was able

to incorporate this lost unity in his work:

> C'est que la vie alors de croyance était pleine,
> C'est qu'on sentait passer dans l'air du soir l'haleine
> De quelque ange attardé s'en retournant au ciel;
> C'est que le sang du Christ teignait vraiment l'autel;
> C'est qu'on était au temps de saint François d'Assise,
> Et que sur chaque roche une cellule assise
> Cachait un fou sublime, insensé de la Croix;
> Le désert se peuplait de lueurs et de voix;
> Dans toute obscurité rayonnait un mystère;
> On aimait, et le ciel descendait sur la terre.
> Gothique Albert Dürer, oh! que profondément
> Tu comprenais cela dans ton coeur d'Allemand!
> (G, II, 85)

This type of art was characterized by a total devotion of the artist to his work:

> C'est que tu n'avais pas, lui faisant double part,
> D'autre amour dans le coeur que celui de ton art;
> (G, II, 86)

Dürer's engraving, which is pure, naïve, and mystic at the same time, embodies, however, the essence of modern human life and destiny, which now lies in melancholy. Addressing Dürer, Gautier says:

> Toi, le coude au genou, le menton dans la main,
> Tu rêves tristement au pauvre sort humain:
> Que pour durer si peu la vie est bien amère,
> Que la science est vaine et que l'art est chimère,
> Que le Christ à l'éponge a laissé bien du fiel,
> Et que tout n'est pas fleurs dans le chemin du ciel.
> Et, l'âme d'amertume et de dégoût remplie,
> Tu t'es peint, ô Dürer! dans ta Mélancolie,
> Et ton génie en pleurs, te prenant en pitié,
> Dans sa création t'a personnifié.
> (G, II, 86-7)

Gautier now goes on to minutely examine the details of the painting: the huge immobile angel; the objects--representative of the sciences and the arts--around him; the dog slumbering at his side; on the horizon,

the ocean which reflects "un grand soleil tout noir;" and the bat which has imprinted on its wing the word "Mélancolie" (G, II, 87-8).

In the concluding section of his poem, Gautier contrasts the grandeur of the medieval artist who "philosophiquement et symboliquement" (G, II, 88) has represented the essence of melancholy with the superficial melancholic posturings of the modern age. Like Keats in the Ode on Melancholy, he criticizes the fashionable poses of melancholy:

> Notre Mélancolie est petite-maîtresse,
> Elle prend des grands airs, elle fait la princesse;
> (G, II, 88)

The purity and philosophical depth of Dürer's representation of melancholy have deteriorated into a Bovary-like melodramatic game. Gautier summarizes his disgust with modern life and art:

> Ah! quelle différence, et que près de ces vieux
> Nous paraissons mesquins! Le sang de nos aieux,
> Comme un vin qui s'aigrit, s'est tourné dans nos veines,
> (G, II, 89)

The past is dead, and there is no hope for its revival in the future:

> Mais, hélas! il n'est pas pour nous d'aube nouvelle,
> Et la nuit qui nous vient est la nuit éternelle.
> (G, II, 90)

Gautier's Melancholia provides an interesting combination of Romantic and post-Romantic elements. His idealization of the past, and in particular of the art of the past, is, as shown above, characteristic of Romantic writers. Like Novalis in Die Christenheit oder Europa (1799) or Chateaubriand in Le Génie du christianisme (1802), he sets up an ideal of a naïve, harmonious past age. He differs, however, from other Romantic writers in his refusal to link the exotic past with the present,

or to project it into a longed-for future. In no way does he suggest in this poem that modern art may, through an imaginative return to the past, derive inspiration for new and forceful art forms. In this respect he is different from Eichendorff who in An die Dichter suggests that an artistic revival may be accomplished through a return to the values of Catholicism, or from Keats who intimates in Robin Hood (1818) that the past, although irretrievable, may yet provide the themes for poetry. Like his view of modern history, Gautier's view of the future of art as expressed in Melancholia is uncompromisingly pessimistic.

From the point of view of melancholy, Gautier believes, like Keats in the Ode on Melancholy, that sadness now lies at the core of human existence, and that mankind's misery may, in great art, be transmuted into beauty. In this attitude, he is a forerunner of Baudelaire. Like Keats, he ridicules and rejects the fashionable melancholic poses taken up by the French Romantics and their contemporary imitators. Nevertheless, he does not believe that the modern age is capable of recapturing the simultaneously serene and grand form of melancholy represented by Dürer and late medieval art. A considerable distance separates Gautier from the idealism of Novalis, Chateaubriand, or even Eichendorff and Keats. In Melancholia, Gautier presents a picture of the unalleviated sterility and bleakness of contemporary life and art.

In the Poésies (1830), Tennant has seen a "balance between intellectual delight, naivety, and a delicate sensuality."[16] With Albertus (1832), La Comédie de la Mort and the accompanying Poésies diverses

(1838), the poet goes on to a more tormented, Byronic form of Romanticism. The mal du siècle expressed in these poems is doubtlessly genuine. In Pensée de minuit (1838), for instance, Gautier speaks of his "dur reveil" (G, II, 127) when his "songes" were proved to be "mensonges".

> Et puis l'âge est venu qui donne la science,
> J'ai lu Werther, René, son frère d'alliance;
> Ces livres, vrais poisons du coeur
> Qui déflorent la vie et nous dégoûtent d'elle,
> Dont chaque mot vous porte une atteinte mortelle,
> Byron et son don Juan moqueur.
> (G, II, 127)

Already, however, he is treating the Romantic tradition ironically. In the "Préface" to Albertus, he writes that the present volume combines "la légende semi-diabolique, semi-fashionable" (G, I, 84). This statement suggests a "tongue-in-cheek exercise in satanic dandyism."[17] The irony which infiltrates the poems following the Poésies is basically a reaction to the unbridgeable gap between ideal and reality. Kurt Weinberg's commentary on Heine may also be applied to Gautier:

> Les visions de Heine naissent d'un état d'exaltation qui paraît fort suspect à sa raison. Elles débordent toujours dans le réel, et le choc de l'idéal avec la réalité produit un désenchantement qui se résout dans les dissonances de l'ironie. Au milieu du rêve, le poète prévoit l'inévitable réveil qui anéantira un bonheur par trop factice.[18]

This type of irony is already post-Romantic:

> Mais déjà dans les premiers écrits de Heine, l'ironie a un certain arrière-goût amer, qui la distingue de l'ironie de Schlegel. Tandis que celle-ci vise presque toujours à l'oubli de la vie et fait de l'humour, de la folie, de la Narrheit une clé de la vision poétique, l'ironie de Heine exprime le plus souvent, sous l'apparence de la légèreté, un pessimisme parfois féroce à l'égard de la femme et du destin.[19]

The Poésies diverses reveal the frequent "metaphysical pessimism" of Gautier:

> . . . an impression is gained of a Gautier moving beyond fashionable romantic melancholy to a pathological state of apprehension, morbidity and even nihilism.[20]

The depth of this pathological morbidity is expressed in Le Trou du serpent (1838) (G, II, 104). Gautier makes no effort in this poem to relieve his sense of solitude and passivity. He is possessed by the Romantic Weltangst or Weltschmerz and sees no way out of it.

Le Trou du serpent follows the Romantic tendency to speak by means of symbols to its most extreme length: the poet becomes the symbol. Gautier bitterly depicts himself as a cold serpent stretched out in the sun:

> Au long des murs, quand le soleil y donne,
> Pour réchauffer mon vieux sang engourdi,
> Avec les chiens, auprès du lazzarone,
> Je vais m'étendre à l'heure de midi.
> (l. 1-4)

For the Romantic ideal of dynamic growth, Gautier substitutes total passivity: "Je reste là sans rêve et sans pensée" (l. 5). Not only the idealism but also the language of Romanticism changes as Gautier indulges in précieux word-plays in the second and third stanzas. "Déjà vieillard et n'ayant pas vécu" (l. 8), an unfeeling life-in-death is his lot:[21]

> Je n'aime rien, parce que rien ne m'aime,
> Mon âme usée abandonne mon corps;
> Je porte en moi le tombeau de moi-même,
> Et suis plus mort que ne sont bien des morts.
> (l. 9-12)

The poem ends as lifelessly as it begins. When the sun has set, the serpent, in the depth of its "peine inconnue", drags itself back into its hole:

> Quand le soleil s'est caché sous la nue,
> Devers mon trou je me traîne en rampant,
> Et jusqu'au fond de ma peine inconnue,
> Je me retire aussi froid qu'un serpent.
> (l. 13-16)

While the hero of this poem still possesses some attributes of the Byronic hero, such as Manfred's unknown sorrow, his contempt for society, and his sense of spiritual and emotional paralysis, the "I" of Gautier's poem lacks stature. The poet has directed irony against himself, lowering himself to a level of apathy and contemptibility. Seen in the context of Romantic melancholy or dejection, this poem stands out as atypical. The poet no longer tries to find a resolution for his problem of spiritual dearth. Unlike Coleridge in the Dejection Ode (1802) or Lamartine in L'Isolement (1818), he does not protest against his state, or look to nature, religion, love, or the unifying power of the imagination for escape. This poem exemplifies what Canat calls "la ruine de la vie intérieure dans le néant de l'ennui."[22]

The exaggeration of the poet's pose leaves, however, some doubt concerning his sincerity. The suspicion remains that he has seized upon a conceit and is exploiting it to the fullest. This, for instance, is a device Gautier follows in La Comédie de la mort, in the passage which explores in a proliferation of macabre but sensual detail the conceit of a marriage consummated in a graveyard between a dead virgin and a worm. The worm is heard to say:

A moi tes bras d'ivoire, à moi ta gorge blanche,
A moi tes flancs polis avec ta belle hanche
A l'ondoyant contour;
A moi tes petits pieds, ta main douce et ta bouche,
Et ce premier baiser que ta pudeur farouche
Refusait à l'amour.
(G, II, 16)

This self-conscious game with conceits goes against the grain of Romantic sincerity. As Henri Peyre writes,

> Even when they [i.e. the Romantics] resorted to inflated language or to exclamatory rhetoric to convey an experience they deemed unique, they were trying to render passionately and exaltedly what they had experienced ardently. Even more than with any of their predecessors, fidelity to their impossible aspirations and sincerity to their expanded selves were of greater import than truth, or were their truth.[23]

Even more than in Le Trou du serpent, Gautier moves away from the convention of sincerity in Tristesse (Poésies diverses, 1838, G, II, 183-4). Self-irony becomes self-parody as the poet develops his theme of despair in such a self-conscious way, with such a desire to startle the reader, that he is playing a game. The first stanza begins with the familiar Romantic juxtaposition of nature and man. Nature is in its lush spring-time, but man feels alienated.

Avril est de retour.
La première des roses,
De ses lèvres mi-closes
Rit au premier beau jour;
La terre bienheureuse
S'ouvre et s'épanouit;
Tout aime, tout jouit,
Hélas! j'ai dans le coeur une tristesse affreuse.
(G, II, 183, 1-18)

This contrast is expanded in the next two stanzas. The poetic 'I' is out of joint with society as well as nature. Merrymakers are celebrating

"le vin et la beauté" (l. 12) with joyful music; young girls "en déshabillés blancs" (l.17) are exchanging long kisses with their suitors; meanwhile, the poet is left with his "tristesse affreuse." The sensuality of the description already hints that the poet may be playing a game with his reader.

Irony explodes in the fourth stanza with a gradation of pathetic details:

> Moi, je n'aime plus rien,
> Ni l'homme, ni la femme,
> Ni mon corps, ni mon âme
> (l. 25-7)

The poet follows this series of complaints with an anticlimactic line which divests the poem of all pretension of seriousness: "Pas même mon vieux chien" (l.28). Now that the poet has established that he no longer loves anyone--man, woman, body, soul, or dog--he concludes:

> Allez dire qu'on creuse
> Sous la pâle gazon
> Une fosse sans nom.
> Hélas! j'ai dans le coeur une tristesse affreuse.
> (l. 29-32)

The form of this poem is especially noteworthy, in that it draws upon the tradition of the folk song.

> Essentially sentimental, nostalgic and melancholy, Gautier was naturally drawn to the ballad and romance genres both by temperament and artistic conviction, and he and Banville helped to renew contemporary interest in a hitherto neglected tradition in France, that of the folk song. . . These qualities already hinted at in Poésies, are united in this small group of romances ('Romance', 'Lamento', 'Les Papillons', 'Absence', 'Barcarolle', 'Tristesse', 'Villanelle Rythmique'), with their suggestion of personal loss. . . and their aura of pre-Verlainian nostalgia allied to a haunting, musical quality.[24]

Preminger remarks that the romance, a traditional form of Spanish origin,

possesses many variations, some of which employ (as in this instance) a periodic refrain. More particularly, Gautier's poem is a romancillo, written in rhyming lines of less than eight syllables.[25] The content of the romance is varied, ranging from the sentimental to the historical to the vulgar. Like Keats's Robin Hood, however, the first lines of this poem raise the expectation that the treatment of the theme will be sentimental and nostalgic; this is, however, destroyed by the irony of the succeeding stanzas.

This poem cannot, however, be strictly regarded as an example of Romantic irony, for Gautier has already gone beyond Romanticism toward absolute pessimism, as in Le Trou du serpent.[26] When no synthesis is sought, and when no illusions exist, the "va-et-vient" which, according to Bourgeois, characterizes Romantic irony is destroyed:

> L'ironie romantique est une contestation permanents--
> il s'agit en effet de témoigner--; mais dans le temps
> où elle met en accusation toutes les valeurs, elle les
> affirme et les défend.[27]

In essence, Gautier's poem is an exercies in self-parody as irony works toward the total undoing of Romantic illusions.

The chronological study of Gautier's poetry reveals an increasing interest in and mastery of form. Reference has been made above to his use of the ballad and romance genres. The poetry after 1838 in particular shows a shift away from Romantic forms as the octosyllable and the sonnet begin to predominate.[28] These forms, seldom used by the French Romantics apart from Sainte-Beuve and Gautier, were revived by Baudelaire, the Parnassiens, and Mallarmé later in the nineteenth century.

> Literary expediency no doubt played its part in this evolution: aware of the exhaustion of certain stock areas of romanticism, Gautier, perhaps consciously, wishes to find new types of expression. No doubt losing confidence in his ability to sustain a lofty theme, the poet appears increasingly aware of his true nature as he turns from the familiar, often borrowed emotionalism to saner, less rhetorical territory and begins to explore a more restricted genre.[29]

Moreover, as we have noted in the study of Moyen âge and Pensées de L'automne, a strong parnassien tendency is evident from the beginning of his poetic career, as he combines a microcosmic vision with a surprising absence of Hugolian rhetoric. His early poetry thus gives indications of a poetic bent which will be further developed in Emaux et camées. Facility and freedom of form give way to a self-conscious attempt at restraint and reticence:

> Oui, l'oeuvre sort plus belle
> D'une forme au travail
> Rebelle,
> Vers, marbre, onyx, émail.
>
> Point de contraintes fausses!
> Mais que pour marcher droit
> Tu chausses,
> Muse, un cothurne étroit.
> (L'Art, G, III, 128, l. 1-8)

The artistic philosophy expressed in L'Art is, however, not totally representative of the tendencies in Gautier's new work. Although the form of the poems in Emaux et camées is highly disciplined, revealing the predomination of octosyllabic verse, the inspiration is as diverse as in his earlier work. Various poems deal with nature and the seasons (Premier sourire du printemps, Lied, Fantaisies d'hiver, Ce que disent

les hirondelles, Noël); others, with aesthetics (Préface, Bûchers et tombeaux, L'Art), while others are personal, dealing with various women in the poet's life (Le Poème de la Femme, Le Monde est méchant, Apollonie). Emaux et camées does not therefore constitute an absolute rupture with Gautier's earlier work; rather, it brings together in a more disciplined form many elements, both Romantic and post-Romantic, already present in his earlier work. Joanna Richardson describes it thus:

> Emaux et camées is often quoted as a technical masterpiece; but it is powerful and significant not only for its style, but because it enlightens many moments of Gautier's life, many aspects of his writing, discloses a man both sensual and sensitive, amusing and reflective, lyrical and philosophic. It shows the fervent pupil of Rioult, delighting in colour and texture, solidity and line; it shows the assured Court poet, the accepted and the rejected lover, the frustrated journalist and the careful, brilliantly accomplished technician, the irrepressible Romantic and the evangelist of Art for Art's Sake. And it does more, for it reflects not only Gautier but the Bohemian age, the Napoleonic cult, the bourgeois years of Louis-Philippe, the licentious, iridescent, enchanting Second Empire. . . It may not do so with the ferocity and power of Baudelaire in Les Fleurs du mal, but it does so quite as surely.[30]

Emaux et camées may be regarded as the completion of the movement toward art for art's sake already started in Gautier's early theoretical writing and poems. Nevertheless, as Jasinski comments, it marks a more complete divorce from Romanticism than indicated by Richardson's analysis:

> Non que la doctrine fût récente. Elle se formulait dès avant 1830, et Gautier lui-même en avait affermi les principes dans la préface d'Albertus et Mademoiselle de Maupin. Mais tout en proclamant avec toutes ses conséquences le divorce du beau et de l'utile, elle représentait alors un romantisme extrême qui prétendait moins ignorer la société que la subordonner de vive force à la transcendance de l'art. Le changement capital était dans l'esprit, désormais contemplatif et désenchanté. Avec la même doctrine initiale, l'art pour l'art en 1852 pourrait se

définir un romantisme douloureusement replié, ou, si l'on veut, un romantisme de vaincus.
(G, I, XCI)

Thematically Gautier's poetry also reveals innovative elements. As the study of Compensation indicates, he does not see the poet in a vatic or prophetic role; art exists for its own sake. In Le Trou du serpent and Tristesse, the familiar Romantic themes of individualism, solitude, alienation and melancholy are blended with a bitter negation of idealism as Heine-like irony shatters Romantic illusions. Another new literary tendency, which points toward le mouvement symboliste, is shown by the concentration on the symbol in Le Trou du serpent. Man no longer speaks through the symbol, as in Vigny's Mort du Loup (1843); rather, he becomes the symbol.

André Gide has somewhat acrimoniously said, "Gautier occupe une place considérable; c'est seulement fâcheux qu'il la remplisse si mal."[31] A poet of no great talent, Gautier is nevertheless important in the history of Romanticism. He recognizes that innovation must take the place of epigonal imitation. As Tennant comments, "Retrospectively Gautier appears clearly a pivotal figure not only between heroical Romanticism and the disillusioned aestheticism of the Parnassian years but between outworn literary conventions and a truly modern viewpoint on art."[32]

NOTES

[1] See L'Histoire du romantisme (Paris: Charpentier, 1877), p. 5.

[2] See, among other biographical and critical works, A. Boschot, Théophile Gautier (Paris: Desclée, 1933), René Jasinski, Les Années romantiques de Théophile Gautier (Paris: Vuibert, 1929)), and Jean Tild, Théophile Gautier et ses amis (Paris: Albin Michel, 1951); and, more recently, Richard Grant, Théophile Gautier (New York: Twayne, 1975) and P.E. Tennant, Théophile Gautier (London: Athlone, 1975).

[3] c.f. Des Esseintes in Huysman's A rebours (Paris: Les Editions G. Crès, 1928), p. 35:"Comme il le disait, la nature a fait son temps; elle a définitivement lassé, par la dégoûtante uniformité de ses paysages et de ses ciels, l'attentive patience des raffinés. Au fond, quelle platitude de spécialiste confinée dans sa partie, quelle petitesse de boutiquière tenant tel article à l'exclusion de tout autre, quel monstre magasin de prairies et d'arbres, quelle banale agence de montagnes et de mers."

In A rebours, however, the contempt mingled with hostility in Compensation has changed to a feeling of ennui.

[4] Tennant, p. 17.

[5] Alphonse de Lamartine, La Chute d'un ange, "Huitième vision," (Paris: Gosselin, 1838), p. 69.

[6] c.f. "Jugendepigonentum;" see Manfred Windfuhr, cited in Introduction, p. 9.

[7] Tennant, p. 31.

[8] Jasinski, p. 99.

[9] Grant, p. 22. Other adverse judgments have been made by Zola, who complains of "le vide absolu de son oeuvre" (Le Messager de l'Europe, July, 1879; cited in Tennant, p. 120); by Georg Brandes: "Sa langue est celle même que lui a léguée son siècle; il s'est contenté d'imprimer son cachet à chacune de ses phrases, sans employer pourtant dans un sens nouveau un mot extraordinaire ou même un mot ordinaire." (L'Ecole romantique en France, trad. A. Topin (Paris: Michalon, 1902), p. 268), or by E. Faguet: "Il périra, je crois, tout entier." (Dix-neuvième siècle. Etudes Littéraires (Paris: Boivin, n.d.), p. 324)

[10] R. Giraud, "Gautier's Dehumanization of Art," Esprit Créateur 3 (1963), 3.

[11] Tennant, p. 37.

[12] See A.J. George, The Development of French Romanticism (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1955), p. 30.

[13] Victor Hugo, Poésies, ed. B. Leuillot (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972), I, pp. 168-8.

[14] Rita Benesch, Le Regard de Théophile Gautier, diss. Zurich, 1969 (Zurich: Juris, 1969), p. 56.

[15] L'Exotisme dans la littérature française depuis Chateaubriand, t. 1: Le Romantisme (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1970, rpt. of Paris, 1938 and 1956), pp. 69-90.

[16] Tennant, p. 40.

[17] Ibid., p. 40.

[18] K. Weinberg, Henri Heine, "Romantique défroqué." Héraut du symbolisme français (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954), p. 89.

[19] Ibid., p. 100.

[20] Tennant, p. 51.

[21] On Gautier's love of paradox, see J.M. Smith, "Gautier, Man of Paradox," Esprit Créateur 3 (1963), 34-9.

[22] René Canat, Une Forme du mal du siècle. Du sentiment de la solitude morale chez les romantiques et les parnassiens. (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1967, rpt. of Paris, 1904), p. 301.

[23] Henri Peyre, Literature and Sincerity (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), p. 119.

[24] Tennant, p. 53.

[25] Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex Preminger et al. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 712-13.

[26] c.f. Weinberg, p. 100.

[27] René Bourgeois, L'Ironie romantique. Spectacle et jeu de Mme de Staël à Gérard de Nerval (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1974), p. 246.

[28] Tennant, p. 30.

[29] Ibid., p. 31.

[30] Joanna Richardson, Théophile Gautier, His Life and Times (New York: Coward-McCann, 1958), pp. 114-15.

[31] André Gide, Lecture, 1914, reprinted in Incidences (Paris: Gallimard, 1924), cited by Tennant, p. 120.

[32] Tennant, p. 98.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The comparative study of selected poems and other texts by Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier reveals the diversity of late Romantic poetry. As we have observed, Eichendorff combines strong moral and religious values with a basically optimistic, uncomplicated Weltanschauung. This differentiates him from Keats, a self-styled "cameleon poet" (KL, I, 387), who insists that the truth of his "half-seeing" (KL, I, 223) need not be channelled into an artificial unity. Gautier's mal du siècle and ironic desire to combine "la légende semi-diabolique, semi-fashionable" (G, I, 84) set him apart from both Eichendorff and Keats. All three poets are, however, aware of the "burden of the past" in the form of their Romantic precursors, and their poetry is an attempt to place themselves either within the context of the movement, or to separate themselves from it. In varying degrees, their work illustrates the problems of epigonism and innovation.

Their view of the poet's function and their criticism of their Romantic precursors shows similarities and differences. Eichendorff and Keats are alike in their somewhat severe criticism of early Romanticism; the underlying reasons, however, differ. In An die Dichter (1811), Eichendorff remains closer to traditional Romanticism than either Keats or Gautier. He views the poet essentially as a vates, possessed of a God-given power to decipher the mysteries of the universe and to pass on this revelation

to humanity. The Romantic ideals of simplicity, intuition, and communion with nature oppose themselves to reason and intellectual probing. This basically Romantic view of the poet is nevertheless modified and limited. In place of the introspection, philosophical complexity, and eternal Sehnsucht of early German Romanticism, Eichendorff posits absolute moral and religious values. He insists that the poet, instead of exploring the inner world of the self, must incorporate the positive values of religion in his work. Like Keats, he criticizes the eventual directions of Romanticism rather than the movement itself in the Geschichte der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands (1857). Early Romanticism had, he states, irreligious and negative elements. Pantheism and aestheticism diverted his precursors from the Christian faith, and the culte du moi, which took the form of personal fragmentation and irony, injected negative qualities. Eichendorff's aim as a poet is to set poetry back on its proper road, "denn die wahre Poesie ist durchaus religiös, und die Religion poetisch" (E, IV, 400-01).

Unlike Eichendorff, Keats focuses on the aesthetic aspects of poetry rather than on the moral or religious values embodied in it. He differs from Eichendorff in that he, like Gautier, does not see the poet as a prophet; indeed, his chief criticism of Wordsworth and other Romantic poets is that they embody "the egotistical sublime"--the desire to impose a self-made philosophy upon their readers. In short, they lack "negative capability." According to Keats, the poet must combine openness with passivity. His awareness and sensitivity must not be blocked by a

stubborn desire to impose absolute moral values on poetry. A major point of similarity between Eichendorff and Keats consists in their condemnation of negative Romanticism. Once more, however, different reasons prompt this criticism. Eichendorff, as we have seen, attacks the personal Zerrissenheit and irony of his precursors on moral and religious grounds. Keats, on the other hand, condemns the fashionable poses of Romanticism, which take the form of excessive introspection and a preoccupation with Gothic horror themes. In Sleep and Poetry, as well as in the Ode on Melancholy, he intimates that experience must replace superficial topoi as the subject matter of poetry. Although he maintains, like Eichendorff, that poetry should "sooth the cares, and lift the thoughts of man" (K, 57, l. 247), this is accomplished by aesthetic means, and not through the "palpable design" (KL, I, 224) of the work.

More than either Eichendorff or Keats, Gautier champions Romanticism in some of his critical writing; paradoxically, however, he moves farther away from the movement than either of his two counterparts. Compensation (1838) reveals that he shares with Eichendorff a belief in the superiority of the poet. This belief is, however, mingled with a contempt for ordinary humanity which sets him apart from Romanticism and allies him with Baudelaire, the décadents, the parnassiens, and the symbolistes. Whereas Eichendorff is aware of his social obligations ("Da soll er singen. . . / Daß aller Herzen freier werden," (E, I, 111, l. 37-39) and Keats determines to incorporate the "agonies, the strife /

Of human hearts" (K, 54, l. 125-5) in his poetry, the poet in Compensation writes without an audience. Unlike Eichendorff, who still sees harmony in nature and foresees a possible millennium in the life of man, and Keats, who does not reject the actualities of life, Gautier sees discordance in both nature and society. Art implies harmony and escape from the meanness of life. This aestheticism nevertheless allies him with Keats, for whom poetry embodies the highest ideal.

More than Eichendorff, Keats and Gautier are aware of the problems of epigonism and innovation. Eichendorff, as we have shown, objects to Romanticism chiefly on moral and religious grounds, and does not concern himself with the problems of thematic or stylistic innovation. Keats objects to both the style and content of contemporary poetry, and the desire to inject fresh elements into poetry figures predominantly in Sleep and Poetry and his letters. Paradoxically, although Gautier does not object to his Romantic precursors as outspokenly as Keats, the need for originality and innovation is yet stressed in L'Histoire du romantisme (1872). Innovation, he states, is a natural outgrowth of literary influence. While Romanticism marked the rebirth of poetry, epigonism can only be avoided if each successive generation adds "la note personnelle" (HR, 299) to the work of precursors. More than Eichendorff or Keats, Gautier thus stresses the evolutionary nature of literary history.

A similar gamut of parallels and differences may also be seen in the three poets' treatment of nature. Of the three poems examined (Keats's Ode to Autumn (1819), Gautier's Pensées de l'automne (1830), and Eichendorff's

Nachts (1853)), the latest poem is surprisingly the closest to the conventions of Romanticism. In Nachts, the vocabulary and scenery of early Romanticism are combined to evoke a mood of deep security and tranquillity. The conventional juxtaposition of man and nature leads to a sense of harmony and unity as man sees the presence of God in the landscape. The chief difference between this and early Romantic poems lies in the facility with which the synthesis is achieved. The poem is simple, harmonious, and free from tensions or conflicting states of feeling. Keats's Ode to Autumn, however, contains no confrontation between nature and the poetic narrator. The poem is almost Parnassian in its concentration on the sights, sounds, and processes of autumn. While Nachts is a lyrical combination of somewhat vague nature motifs, To Autumn distinguishes itself through its concreteness of description. Although both poems are relatively free from discursive language, Nachts has a fragmentary quality typical of the Stimmungslyrik. To Autumn combines a tightness of language with a corresponding tightness of form, to achieve classic harmony and balance. Eichendorff's poem, moreover, presents a transcendent unity in the form of God and incorporates a religious message. Although a unified world view emerges from To Autumn as the processes of life, growth, and death are regarded as inevitable cycles, this unity is not transcendent and no didactic message is embodied. Gautier's Pensées de l'autumne is, in a sense, mid-way between Nachts and To Autumn. The work of a young poet, it contains many derivative elements, and the poet's attempt to turn it into a meditation is feeble. His approach to nature is basically

detached, and he is at his best when he describes specific objects, shapes, and colours. The concreteness of his vision parallels that of Keats in To Autumn and foreshadows a movement toward l'art pour l'art. No dynamic interaction exists between the poet and nature, and the poem resolves no personal conflicts and arrives at no philosophical conclusions.

The treatment of exoticism reveals a similar pattern. Eichendorff is again closest to the Romantic tradition, while the young Gautier tries unsuccessfully to reproduce Romantic themes in Moyen âge. Keats, however, tempers Romantic nostalgia with detachment and irony. Sehnsucht (1834) presents Romantic yearning in its most uncomplicated form: that of Wanderlust. The poem is essentially a flight of fancy as one picturesque image evokes another. The imagination is, however, kept in check, and the poet's yearning gives rise to no dark introspection and to no unrestrained fantasies. As in Nachts, the brightness of mood is parallelled by a self-conscious neatness of form. Gautier's Moyen âge (1830) is another example of self-conscious Romanticism, although the poet does not succeed as well as Eichendorff in his efforts to create a Stimmung. Like Pensées de l'automne, the poem reveals a split in Gautier's creative tendencies: in spite of his desire to reproduce the cosmic vision of his Romantic precursors, his talent lies in the direction of the concrete and the limited. The naïvety and idealism of Sehnsucht and Moyen âge are, however, tempered by light irony in Keats's Robin Hood (1818). Although the poet does not deny the exotic attraction of the

past, it is nevertheless viewed in the light of the present. The nostalgic mood, successfully evoked in Sehnsucht and unsuccessfully in Moyen âge, is self-consciously ruptured in Robin Hood. Keats remains rooted in the actualities of the present, and no Rousseauistic idealization of the primitive state of man enters into the poem. Keats suggests, however, that the past is made immortal through song, which reveals, as in Sleep and Poetry, that he looks for the ideal in art and not in Romantic dreams of a golden age. Gautier's Melancholia (1834), in contrast with Robin Hood, is strongly Romantic in that it idealizes a past age of pure and living faith. While Keats tends to debunk Romantic nostalgia after a lost golden age, Gautier expresses a fervent admiration of the purity and depth of medieval life and art before it became corrupted by conflicting religious doctrines. Keats and Gautier are, however, similar in that they, unlike earlier Romantics, do not set up the ideal of a new millennium. The past, Gautier intimates, is irretrievable, and cannot be projected into a longed-for future. In this respect, his stance is more extreme than that of Keats. While Keats does not deny that exotic themes may yet provide inspiration for art, Gautier maintains in Melancholia that the present age is artistically sterile.

Romantic and post-Romantic features are also combined in the three poets' treatment of melancholy. Once more, Eichendorff's Zwielicht (1815) is the closest to early Romanticism, while Keats and Gautier move beyond and against the tradition. Zwielicht, as observed,

presents a pessimistic world-view seldom to be found in Eichendorff's poetry. Both nature and man are guilty of savagery and duplicity. This problem of Weltangst is, however, resolved with a facility characteristic of Eichendorff: man, he says, must protect himself by remaining true to his religious faith. The poem does not, moreover, evolve naturally toward this conclusion, but has the religious message somewhat arbitrarily superimposed in the last stanza. Zwielicht is thus linked to earlier Romanticism by its Weltangst and its idealism, but separated from it by the conservative and facile manner in which the problems are resolved. As is customary in Eichendorff's poetry, the poem does not indicate that the poet is probing his own anguish or his own anxieties. Keats's Ode on Melancholy (1819) differs from Zwielicht by taking a dramatic and not a didactic approach. The poet begins by rejecting the standard literary trappings of melancholy, along with superficial poses and emotional indulgence. True melancholy is, he suggests, nevertheless an inseparable part of all intense experience. As in To Autumn, life and death are seen as part of an inevitable process which, unlike Eichendorff, Keats does not try to transcend. His suggestion of a transmutation of pain and pleasure and of beauty and death already has elements of the Decadent and Symbolist aesthetic outlook. Once more, Gautier and Keats are similar in that they ridicule and reject fashionable melancholic poses. Like the Ode on Melancholy, moreover, Gautier's Melancholia expresses a belief that true melancholy--setting aside its superficial manifestations--lies at

the core of modern life, and that it may, as in Dürer's engraving, be transmuted into beauty. He is, however, less idealistic than Keats. The simultaneously serene and pure expression of melancholy which was possible for Dürer in the late middle ages is denied to modern man.

Gautier's Trou du serpent again exemplifies the curious split in his early poetry between Romantic and non-Romantic elements. A more mature work than Pensées de l'automne or Moyen âge, the poem is no longer a weak imitation of early Romantic works. Gautier combines Byronic themes such as alienation and pathological morbidity with a total lack of Romantic idealism. The stature of the Romantic hero is destroyed by self-directed irony. The poet's self-conscious use of word-plays and his development of a conceit also go, as we have seen, against the current of Romantic sincerity. The poem is thus a Heine-like exercise in the shattering of illusions as an unalleviated sense of mal du siècle predominates.

The use of irony in the three poems examined (Der Soldat (1814), Robin Hood (1818) and Tristesse (1838)) also shows considerable diversity, ranging from Eichendorff's treatment of traditional medieval motifs, Keats's debunking of Romantic nostalgia, and Gautier's transformation of Romantic irony into absolute negativism. Of the three poems, Der Soldat is the most self-consciously Romantic. Once more, Stimmung predominates as Eichendorff gracefully combines the somewhat stylized medieval motifs of gallant knights, castles, beautiful maidens, and a frenzied flight from enemies. The Romantic irony consists in a negation

(the narrator's feigned indifference toward what is nearest to him) in Part I, and the affirmation (the revelation of his true feelings) in Part II. Like Sehnsucht, however, Der Soldat is a Trivialisierung of exotic themes. The poem is picturesque and evocative but lacks immediacy. The irony in Robin Hood, however, consists in the continual shift from past to present, as Keats employs playfulness and mock sentimentality to poke fun at his own fantasies. While Eichendorff's poem is simply an imaginative flight into the past, Keats relativizes past and present, blending sensibility with detachment. An affirmation does, however, emerge from his critical attitude: although the actualities of the present cannot be denied, the lyrical themes of the past can nevertheless survive through song. Tristesse, unlike Der Soldat and Robin Hood, makes use of irony to explode all possible hopes of reconciling the ideal and the real. Like Keats, Gautier turns ironically upon Romantic conventions. Employing familiar themes such as solitude and alienation, he points out the impossbility of escape through nature or love. Irony is directed at himself: since no one loves him, not even his dog, death is the only solution. The solitary Romantic hero thus loses stature and is put up to ridicule through self-parody, and the pattern of negation and affirmation in Der Soldat and Robin Hood gives way to pure negation in Tristesse as irony takes on a post-Romantic form.

Definite similarities exist between Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier on the formal and stylistic level. In the works of all three poets, the rhetoric and freedom of form of earlier Romantic poetry are replaced by

greater restraint, symmetry, and reticence. This is doubtlessly a reflection of a change in subject matter, as the three writers move away from introspective dramatization toward greater detachment. While their diction remains, particularly with Eichendorff, relatively simple, form starts to play a more dominant role.

Eichendorff's poetry reveals little development either in content or in form; for this reason, it is difficult to distinguish between his early and late poems. From the beginning, he makes a calculated appeal to Volkstümlichkeit by taking over the rhythms and forms of German folk songs. Many poems, such as Sehnsucht, Der Soldat, or Zwielicht achieve their effect as much from their musicality as from their actual content. In spite of the air of spontaneity imparted by the simplicity of form, his poetry nevertheless shows restraint and discipline. As we have observed, his poems are neatly structured, and Zielschlüsse and Pointenschlüsse are frequent (c.f. Sehnsucht and Nachts). Variations of rhythms or line length within a poem are rare, and his poetry seldom reveals an over-abundance of verbal or rhetorical effects. In general, he restricts himself to a limited number of verse forms inherited from or revived by his immediate predecessors, imposing upon them greater restraint and symmetry. More than Eichendorff, Keats and Gautier are poets in development, and their poetry reveals a progressive mastery of style. From the discursiveness of Sleep and Poetry, for instance, Keats progresses to the tightness of language and form of To Autumn. Although he makes extensive use of verse forms popular

among his precursors, such as the ode, the sonnet, and the ballad, his mature poems show restraint and sobriety as the poet remains in the background and speaks through the image, rather than through a poetic "I". The concreteness and detail of his imagery distinguish his poetry from that of Byron or Shelley, who tend to be more abstract. He experiments, moreover, with a seventeenth-century verse form in Robin Hood and, in The Eve of St. Agnes (1819), masters the Spenserian stanza. Similarly, Gautier moves from the imitative awkwardness of the Poésies (1830) to help revive the ballad, romance, and sonnet in his later poetry. Like those of Eichendorff, his poems are often neatly structured, with a frequent use of the pointe and the conceit (c.f. Le Trou du serpent and Tristesse). More than Eichendorff or Keats, he indulges in paradox and word-plays which impart an element of préciosité. Like that of Keats, his imagery is directed toward the concrete. Plasticity of form predominates, and aural effects are of secondary importance. Although he may, as in La Comédie de la mort or Tristesse make use of Hugolian rhetoric in the form of frequent coupes romantiques, exclamations, gradation, antithesis, and other devices, these are, as we have seen, often employed to an ironic end as the poet seeks to poke fun at Romantic conventions through exaggeration and parody.

In general, the three poets share a common interest in the forms of folk poetry. The Romantic meditative monologue is, however, relatively rare, and when it is employed, as in the Ode on Melancholy, the poet

injects an air of objectivity and detachment unusual in earlier Romantic writing. While the metaphor remains an important vehicle for the association of ideas, Keats and Gautier tend to focus more on the object itself, instead of projecting their own feelings into the representation. Although the "pathetic fallacy," whereby the poet reads his own thoughts and feelings into the external world, exists in Eichendorff's poems (c.f. Zwielicht and Nachts), Keats, through his dislike of the "egotistical sublime," often remains objective. The symbol is given a new importance in Gautier's Trou du serpent through the total identification of the poet with the image. All three poets, however, remain largely within the discipline of verse forms and experiment little with free verse.

Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier are thus three late Romantic poets faced with the choice of the latecomer in a literary tradition: to either continue the course mapped out by various precursors, or to innovate, thereby creating new conventions. This dilemma is, of course, heightened by the Romantic cult of originality. The purpose of this study has not been, however, to examine their poetry with a view to imposing uncompromising labels such as "epigonal" or "innovative". Both epigonism and innovation must be regarded as relative terms. The study of selected lyrical poems by Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier shows that imitative and original elements exist side by side and, as Gautier points out, "on est toujours fils de quelqu'un, même quand le père est renié par l'enfant." (HR, 299). Nevertheless, conclusions can be drawn concerning the extent

to which these three poets are content to remain within their respective Romantic traditions.

At this point, a brief recapitulation of the attributes of epigonal writing as described by Windfuhr will be useful.[1] These characteristics include the facile combination of literary topoi, the elimination of discordances, a general trivialization, a movement toward greater simplicity, and a calculated appeal to popular sentiment. The epigone may also try to expand upon the work of his model through experimentation with form and the injection of précieux elements; or, finally, he may turn ironically upon the tradition he has propagated.

Eichendorff's poetry reveals many epigonal elements. He takes over the work of precursors such as Novalis, Tieck, and Brentano and gracefully combines and recombines familiar topoi -- mountains, forests, streams, light and darkness, gardens, and music. From the frequently jarring discordances and personal Zerrissenheit of early Romanticism, he creates a basically tranquil and harmonious world view. In place of the often perplexed religious questionings of Novalis or Brentano he substitutes religious certainties. Romantic Sehnsucht, seen as a form of unendliches Streben in Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde (1799) and other works, is trivialized to become a picturesque flight of fancy. His poems are not effusive and formless but disciplined and symmetrical. His work shows, moreover, little development. He arrives at a pattern and reproduces it with variations. Since his late poetry is surprisingly similar to his earlier work, he becomes, in a sense,

his own epigone. This does not, however, prevent him from being an outstanding lyrical poet. What his poetry lacks in depth, it achieves in grace and evocativeness. Moreover, his popularization of folk forms helped to revive German interest in the oral tradition. The musicality of his verse and his skill at producing a Stimmung link him in many ways to the Symbolists, and in particular, to Verlaine.[2]

Keats and Gautier reveal elements of Jugendepigonentum in their early works. The enthusiasm and the lush but discursive description in Keats's Sleep and Poetry, for instance, is largely an inheritance from early Romanticism. Keats is, however, more rebellious than Eichendorff; moreover, English Romanticism was pervaded with the didacticism and "egotistical sublime" of Wordsworth, and Byron and Shelley had popularized the conventional poses of the Romantic hero. Rebellion against the poetry of "palpable design" and against superficial topoi causes Keats to evolve to an "art for art's sake" type of philosophy; at the same time, his innate scepticism and detachment cause him to reject the basically transcendental philosophy of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Although he retains much of the lively sensibility of Romanticism, he combines it with detachment. Unlike Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, or Byron, Keats is not his own hero. His frequently down-to-earth approach links him to the Realist tradition, while the concreteness of his description preshadows le mouvement parnassien. The type of sensibility expressed in Ode on Melancholy, moreover, already links him to Baudelaire, the Decadents, and the Symbolists.

More than Keats, the young Gautier begins as an epigone. Many

poems in the Poésies are indeed "verflacht und verengt"[3] imitations of Hugo and other Romantics. Unlike Eichendorff, Gautier is unable to reproduce the cosmic themes of his precursors. His picturesque tendencies already point him toward l'art pour l'art and le Parnasse. At the same time, a keen wit combined with a genuine sense of the prevalent mal du siècle lead him to explore "la légende semi-diabolique, semi-fashionable" and to deflate Romantic idealism with irony and parody. Unlike Eichendorff and Keats, Gautier totally rejects the idealism of his Romantic precursors and contemporaries and moves toward a world view which is basically nihilistic. Although he expresses a belief in the autonomous value of art in the preface to Mademoiselle de Maupin and other works, he is nevertheless aware, as in Melancholia, that the present age does not breed great art.

Eichendorff, Keats, and Gautier thus reveal the diversity of ways in which the late Romantic poet handles the problems of epigonism and innovation. As Gautier says, "l'originalité n'est que la note personnelle ajoutée au fonds commun préparé par les contemporains ou les prédécesseurs immédiats" (HR, 299).

NOTES

[1] c.f. Manfred Windfuhr, "Der Epigone. Begriff, Phänomen, Bewußtsein," Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte 4 (1958-9), 182-209.

[2] See William De Carr Sims, "From Transcendence to Agony: Eichendorff, Verlaine, and the Nineteenth Century Poetic Tradition," DA, 38 (1977), 3471A-72A (Univ. of Oregon).

[3] Windfuhr, p. 192.

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